



US009261246B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Ogata et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,261,246 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 16, 2016**

(54) **LIGHT-EMITTING MODULE, LIGHT SOURCE DEVICE, LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE, AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING LIGHT-EMITTING MODULE**

(2013.01); *F21V 3/00* (2013.01); *F21V 17/101* (2013.01); *H05K 3/284* (2013.01); *F21V 19/005* (2013.01); *F21V 19/0055* (2013.01);
(Continued)

(75) Inventors: **Toshifumi Ogata**, Osaka (JP); **Kenji Sugiura**, Osaka (JP); **Makoto Morikawa**, Nara (JP)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC *F21K 9/90*; *F21K 9/1355*; *F21V 17/101*; *F21V 3/00*; *F21V 29/89*; *F21V 29/507*
See application file for complete search history.

(73) Assignee: **PANASONIC INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CO., LTD.**, Osaka (JP)

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 18 days.

2004/0104391 A1 6/2004 Maeda et al.
2005/0173708 A1 8/2005 Suehiro et al.
(Continued)

(21) Appl. No.: **13/265,821**

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

(22) PCT Filed: **Mar. 11, 2011**

CN 1628390 6/2005
CN 101266968 9/2008

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/JP2011/001443**

(Continued)

§ 371 (c)(1),
(2), (4) Date: **Oct. 21, 2011**

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

(87) PCT Pub. No.: **WO2011/111399**

Machine English translation of JP 2009010308 A to Sanpei et al.*
(Continued)

PCT Pub. Date: **Sep. 15, 2011**

Primary Examiner — Anne Hines

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2012/0044669 A1 Feb. 23, 2012

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Mar. 11, 2010 (JP) 2010-054268

(51) **Int. Cl.**

F21K 99/00 (2010.01)
F21V 3/00 (2015.01)

(Continued)

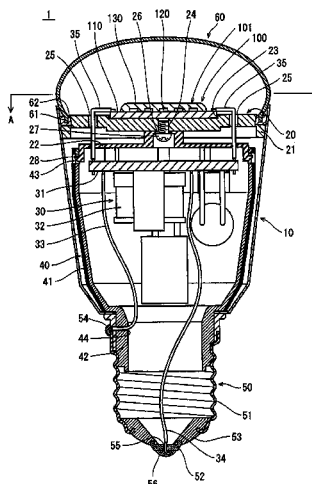
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided is a light-emitting module, a light source device and a liquid crystal display device in which unevenness in the luminance and color hardly occurs as compared to conventional technology. A light-emitting module **100** is structured such that a plurality of element columns, each composed of light-emitting elements **120** arranged in line, are mounted on a substrate **110**, and each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **130**. The light source device and the liquid crystal device each include the above light-emitting module **100**.

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC *F21K 9/90* (2013.01); *F21K 9/1355*

7 Claims, 18 Drawing Sheets



- (51) **Int. Cl.**
- | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| F21V 17/10 | (2006.01) | 2009/0296017 A1 | 12/2009 | Itoh et al. |
| H05K 3/28 | (2006.01) | 2009/0315054 A1 | 12/2009 | Kim et al. |
| F21V 19/00 | (2006.01) | 2009/0315057 A1 * | 12/2009 | Konishi et al. 257/98 |
| F21Y 101/02 | (2006.01) | 2010/0188852 A1 | 7/2010 | Sanpei et al. |
| F21Y 105/00 | (2006.01) | 2011/0057569 A1 * | 3/2011 | Wei et al. 315/122 |
| H01L 25/075 | (2006.01) | 2011/0084297 A1 * | 4/2011 | Ogata et al. 257/98 |
| H01L 33/54 | (2010.01) | 2011/0116005 A1 * | 5/2011 | Sakai et al. 349/61 |
| F21V 29/507 | (2015.01) | 2011/0182073 A1 | 7/2011 | Sanpei et al. |
| F21V 29/89 | (2015.01) | 2012/0007112 A1 | 1/2012 | Yamada et al. |
- (52) **U.S. Cl.**
- CPC F21V 29/507 (2015.01); F21V 29/89 (2015.01); F21Y 2101/02 (2013.01); F21Y 2105/001 (2013.01); H01L 25/0753 (2013.01); H01L 33/54 (2013.01); H01L 2224/45139 (2013.01); H01L 2224/45144 (2013.01); H01L 2224/48091 (2013.01); H01L 2224/48227 (2013.01); H01L 2924/3025 (2013.01); H05K 2201/10106 (2013.01)
- (56) **References Cited**
- U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS
- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| 2005/0227569 A1 | 10/2005 | Maeda et al. | |
| 2005/0285926 A1 * | 12/2005 | Mizuyoshi | 347/212 |
| 2006/0086384 A1 | 4/2006 | Nakata | |
| 2006/0124942 A1 | 6/2006 | Maeda et al. | |
| 2006/0186431 A1 | 8/2006 | Miki et al. | |
| 2007/0037747 A1 | 2/2007 | Ma et al. | |
| 2007/0046169 A1 | 3/2007 | Maeda et al. | |
| 2007/0114555 A1 | 5/2007 | Takemoto et al. | |
| 2008/0128739 A1 | 6/2008 | Sanpei et al. | |
| 2008/0135862 A1 | 6/2008 | Maeda et al. | |
| 2008/0224608 A1 | 9/2008 | Konishi et al. | |
| 2009/0031504 A1 | 2/2009 | Lang | |
| 2009/0166657 A1 | 7/2009 | Yamada et al. | |
| 2009/0194783 A1 | 8/2009 | Takemoto et al. | |
| 2009/0231833 A1 | 9/2009 | Miki et al. | |
| 2009/0283779 A1 * | 11/2009 | Negley et al. | 257/88 |
- FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS
- | | | |
|----|----------------|---------|
| JP | S52-120552 | 9/1977 |
| JP | 05-299702 | 11/1993 |
| JP | 11-274572 | 10/1999 |
| JP | 2004-253534 | 9/2004 |
| JP | 2006-049857 | 2/2006 |
| JP | 2006-229055 | 8/2006 |
| JP | 2006/351708 | 12/2006 |
| JP | 2007-158009 | 6/2007 |
| JP | 2007-294991 | 11/2007 |
| JP | 2008-091354 | 4/2008 |
| JP | 2008/244165 | 10/2008 |
| JP | 2009-021221 | 1/2009 |
| JP | 2009010308 A * | 1/2009 |
| JP | 2009-038315 | 2/2009 |
| JP | 2009-147281 | 7/2009 |
| JP | 2009-164157 | 7/2009 |
| JP | 2010-010681 | 1/2010 |
| JP | 2010/278266 | 12/2010 |
- OTHER PUBLICATIONS
- Japanese Patent Application No. 2012-168166 Office Action dated Sep. 25, 2012, 2 pages.
- Japanese Patent Application No. 2012-168164 Office Action dated Sep. 25, 2012; 2 pages.
- European Application No. 11753062.6 Extended Search Report dated Nov. 26, 2013, 12 pages.
- Office Action Issued on Oct. 20, 2015 for China Patent Application No. CN201180001913.X, filed on Mar. 11, 2011 (with partial English language translation) (11 pages).
- * cited by examiner

FIG. 2

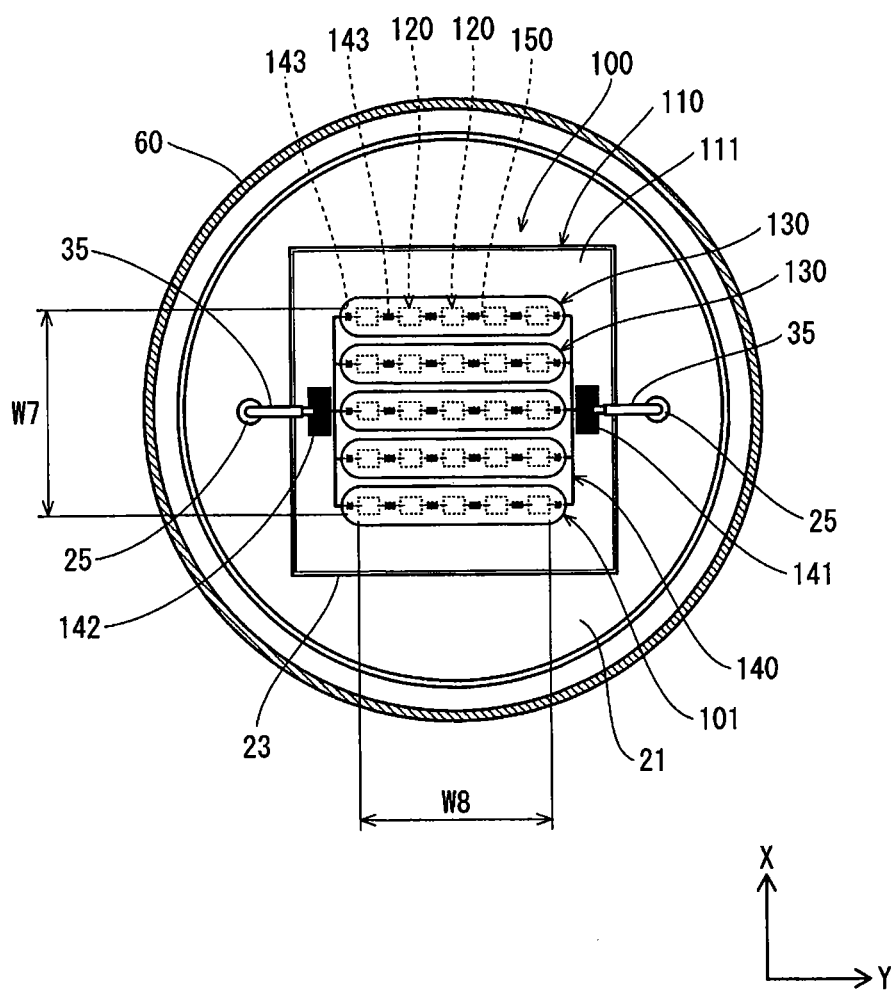


FIG. 3

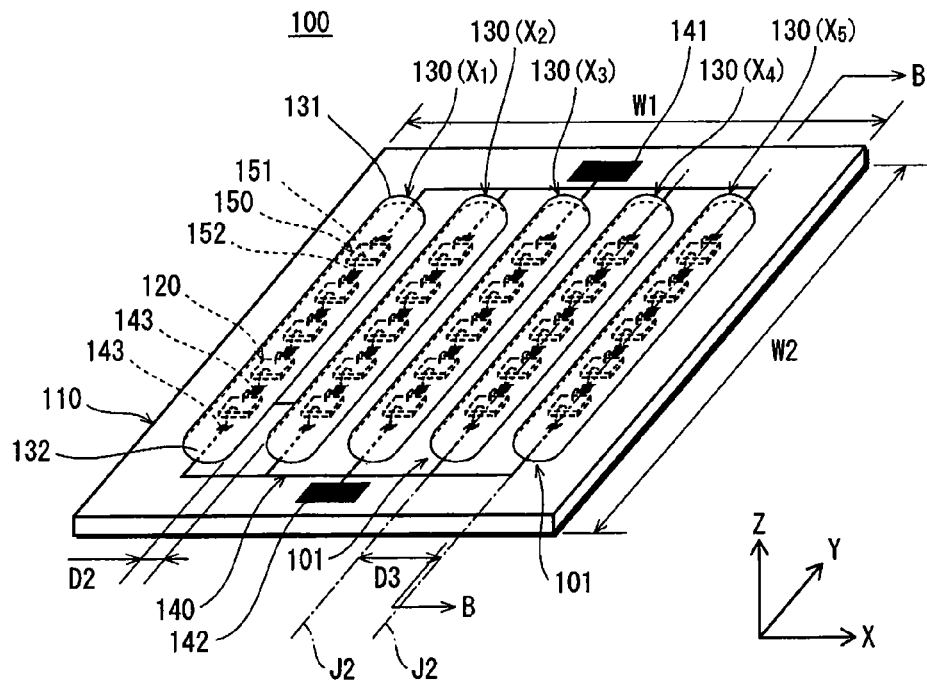


FIG. 4A

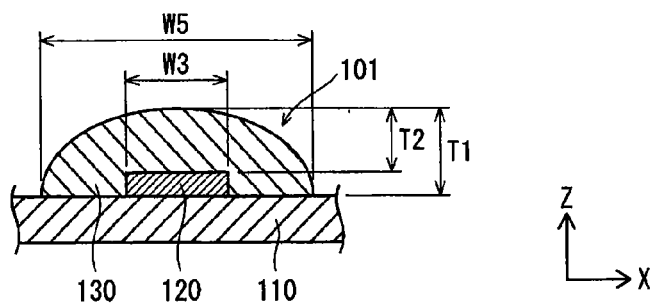


FIG. 4B

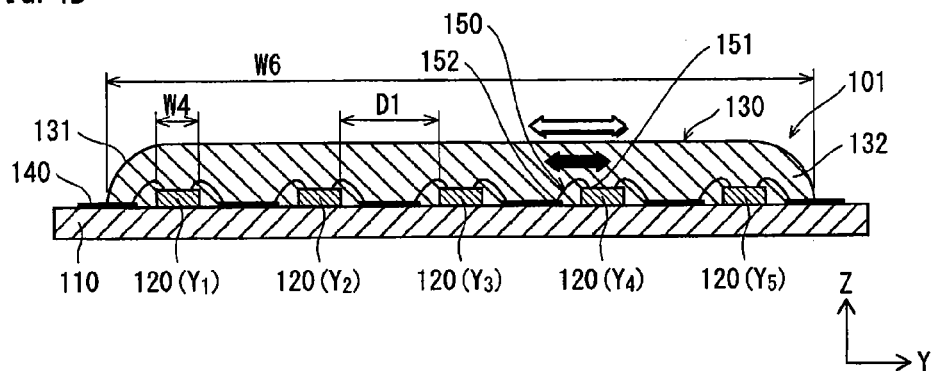


FIG. 5A

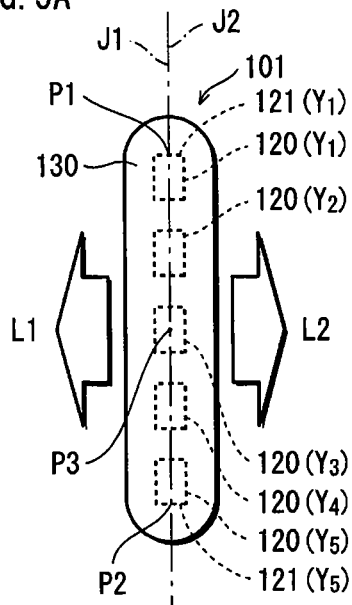


FIG. 5B

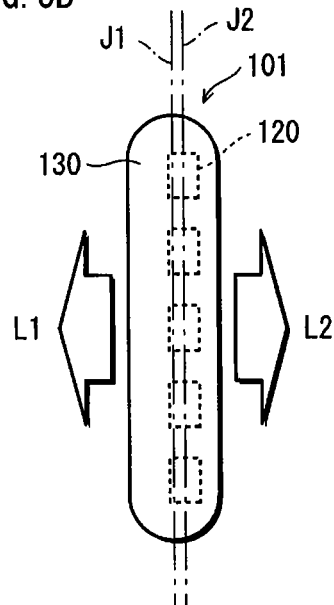


FIG. 6

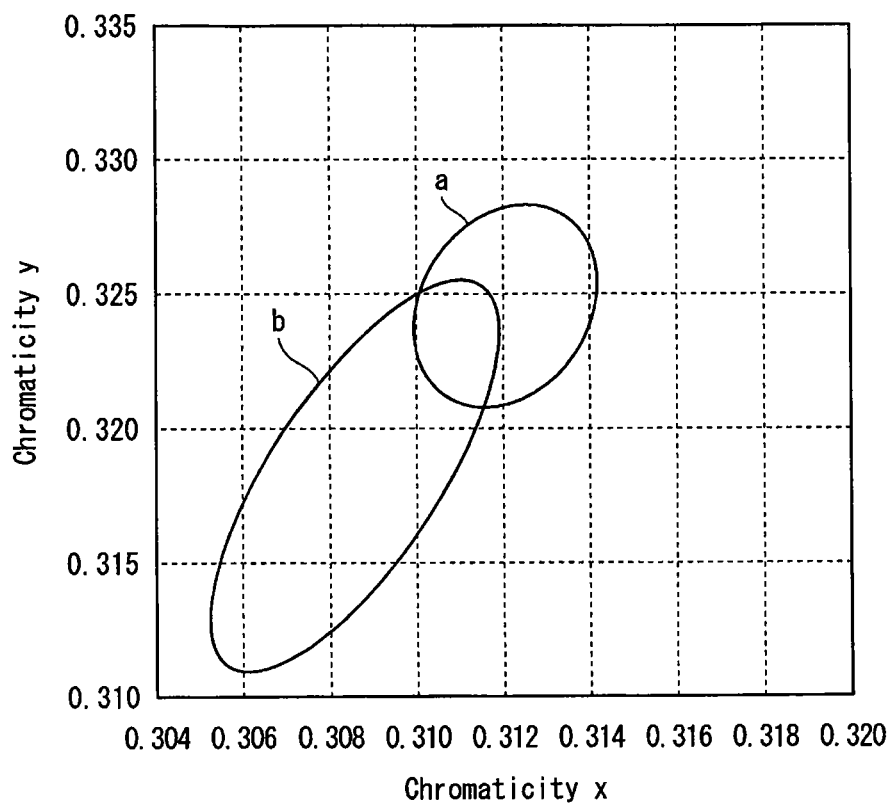


FIG. 7A

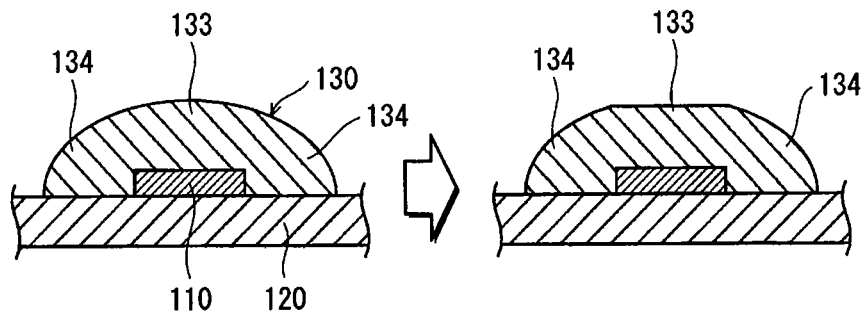


FIG. 7B

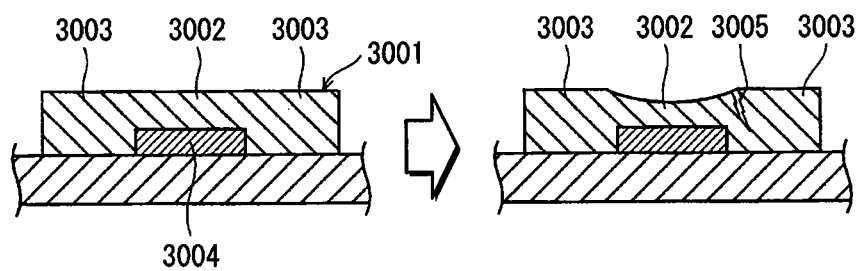
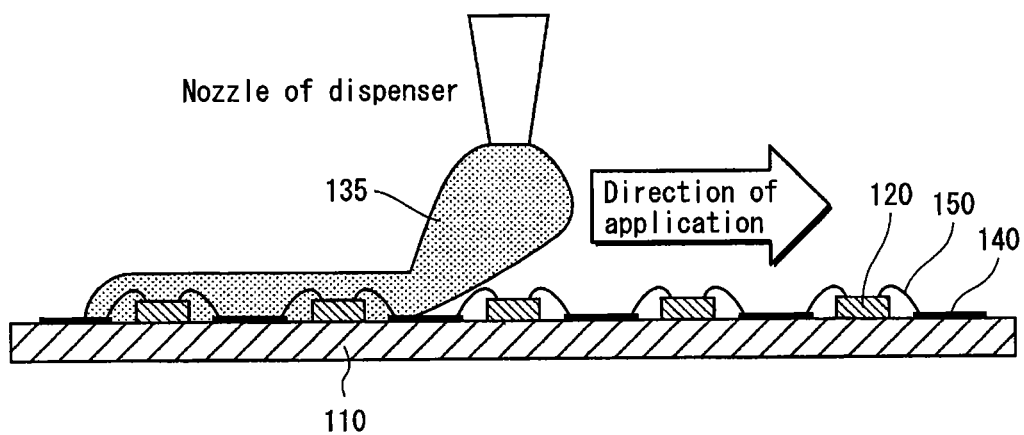


FIG. 8



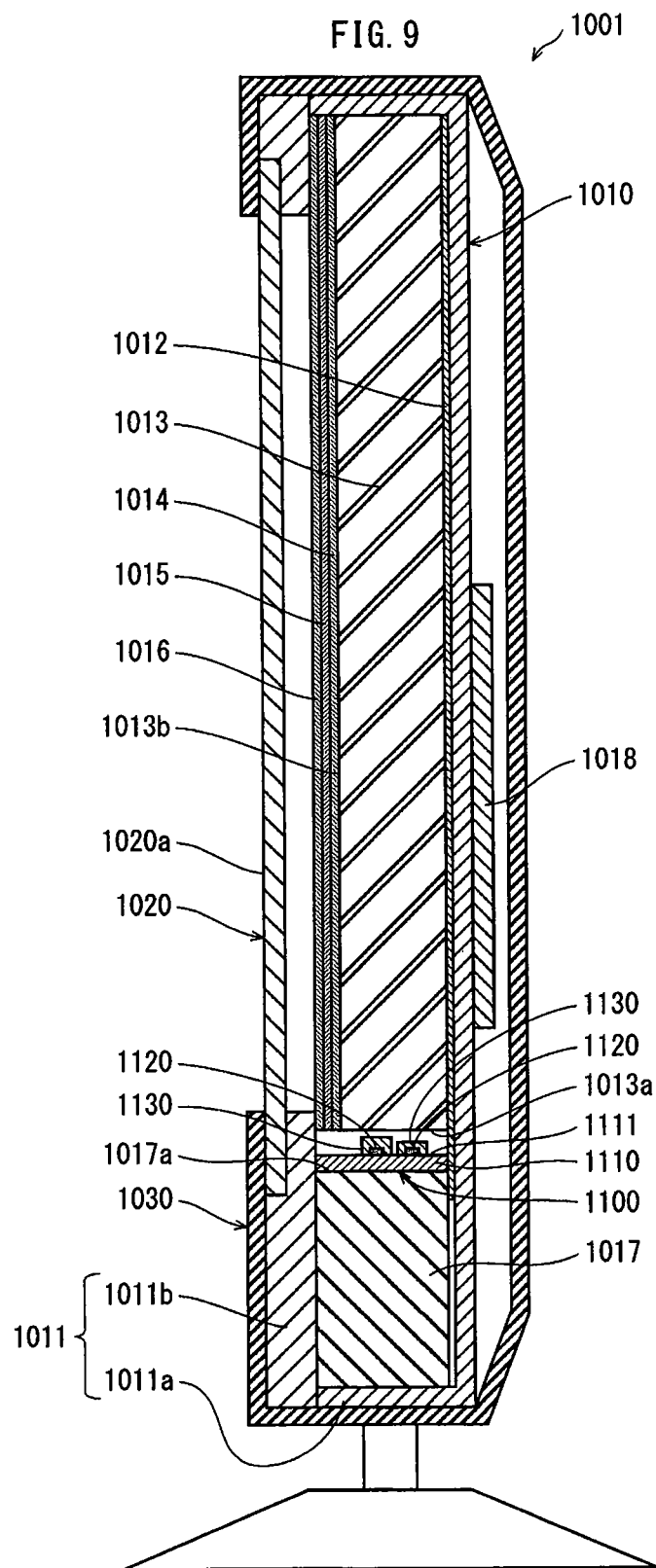


FIG. 10

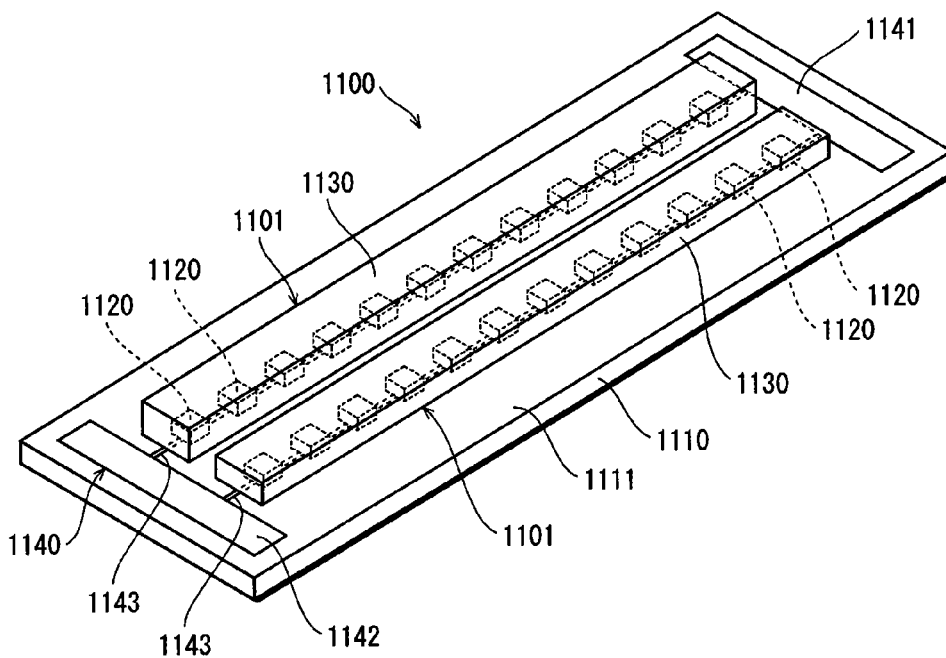


FIG. 11

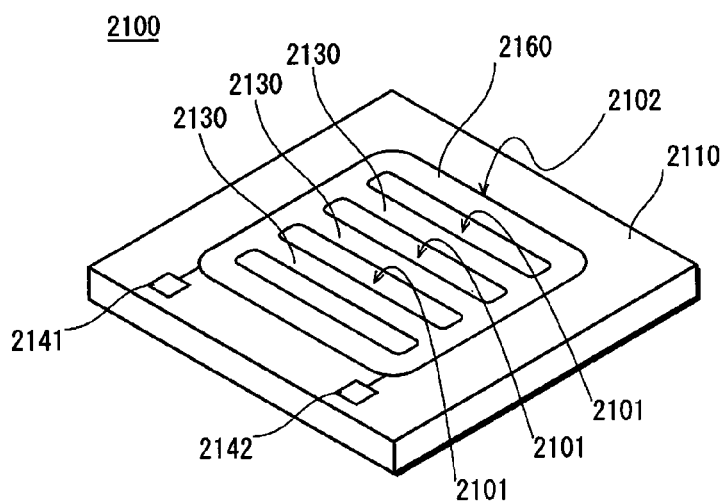


FIG. 12

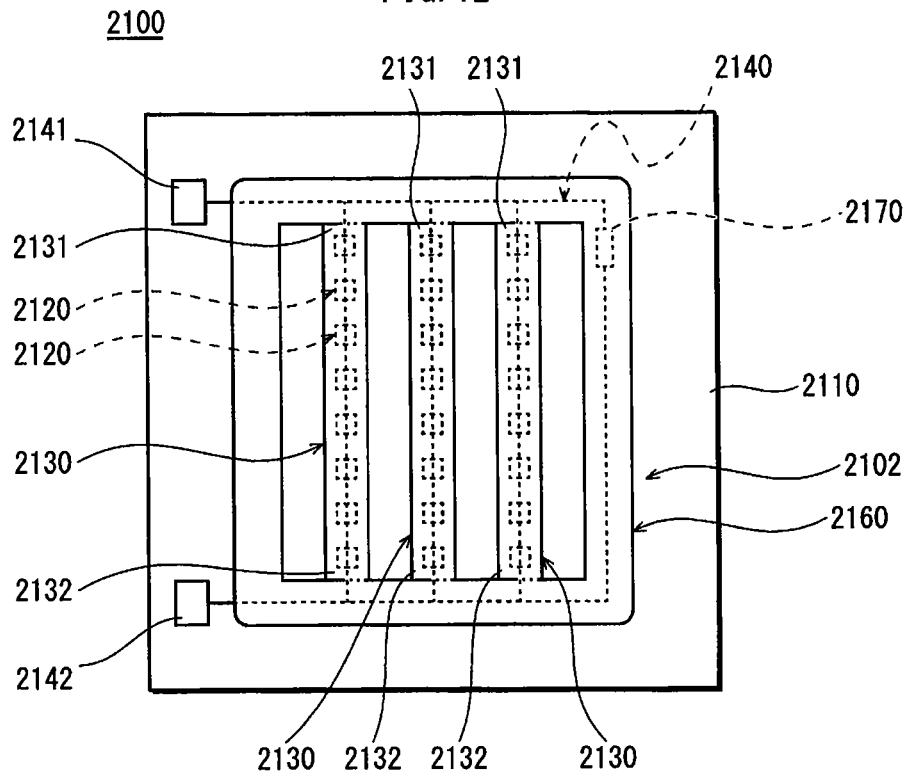


FIG. 13

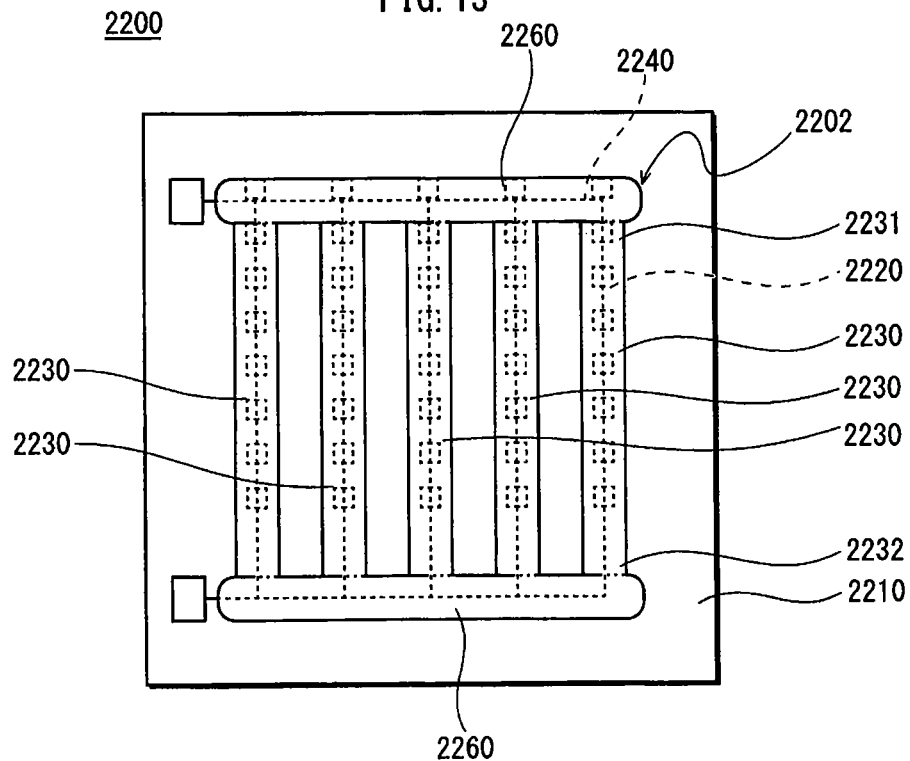


FIG. 14

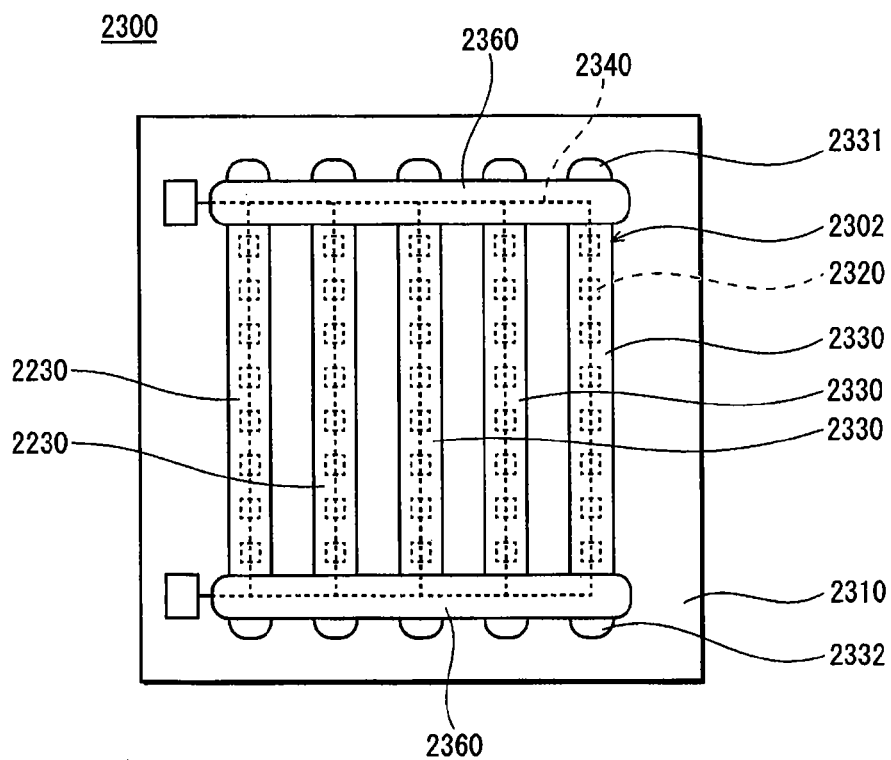


FIG. 15

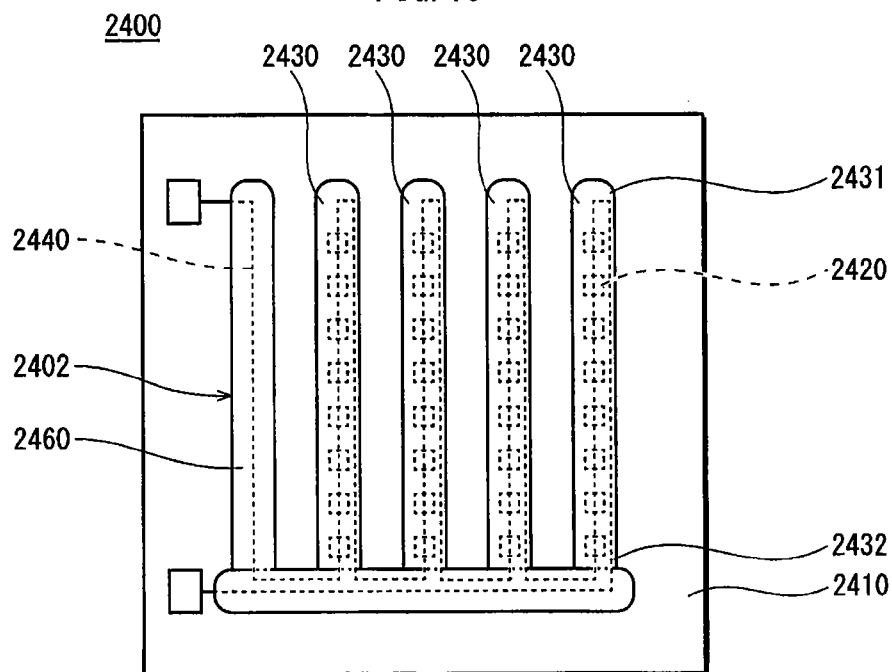


FIG. 16

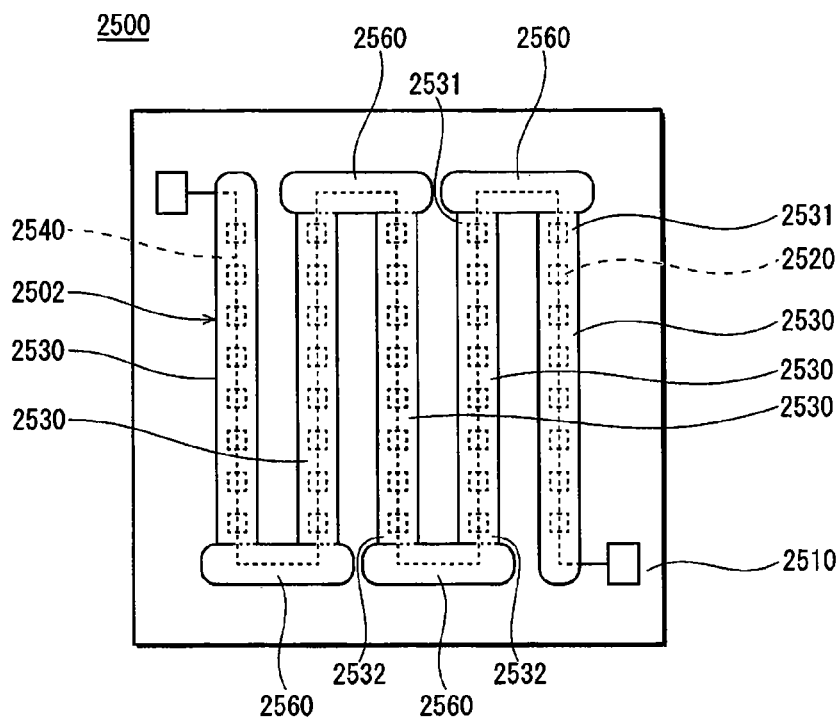


FIG. 17

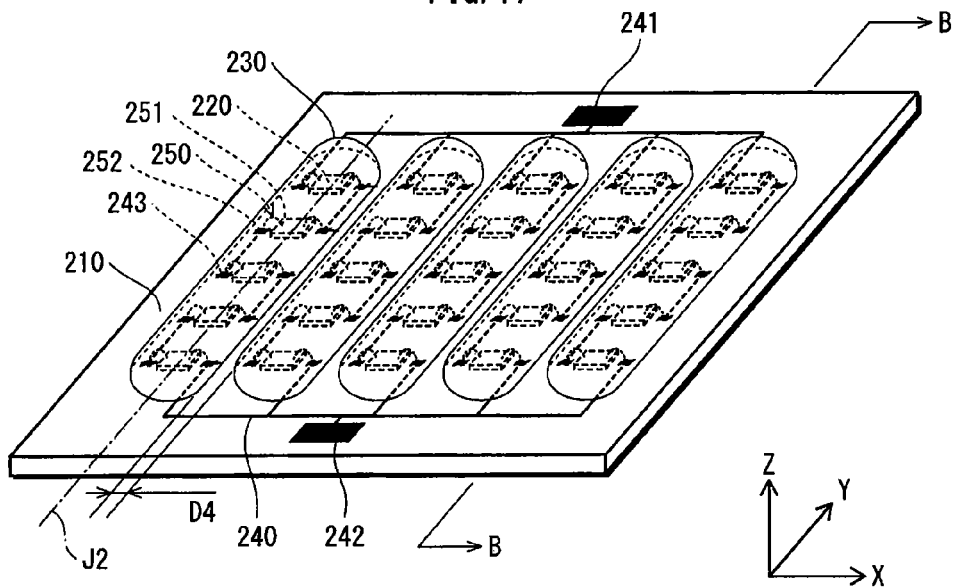


FIG. 18A

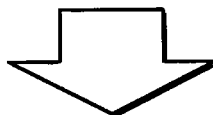
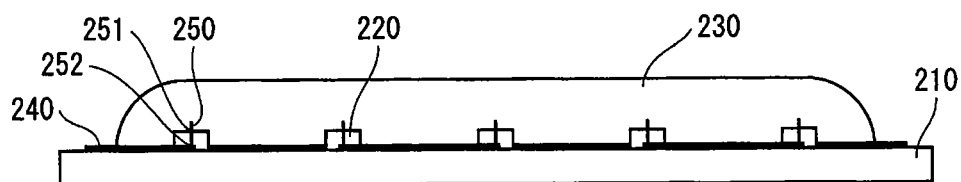


FIG. 18B

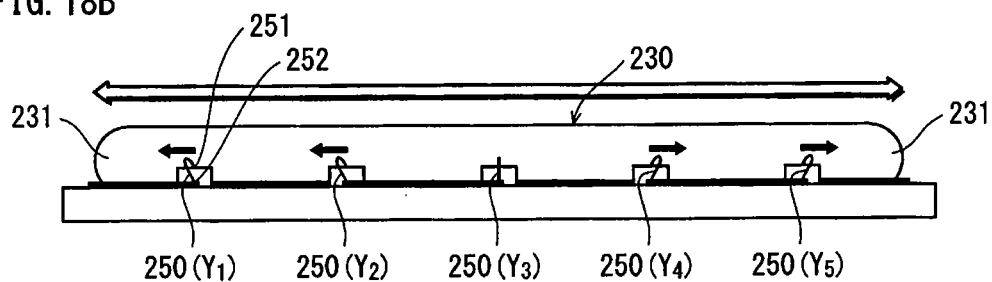


FIG. 19A

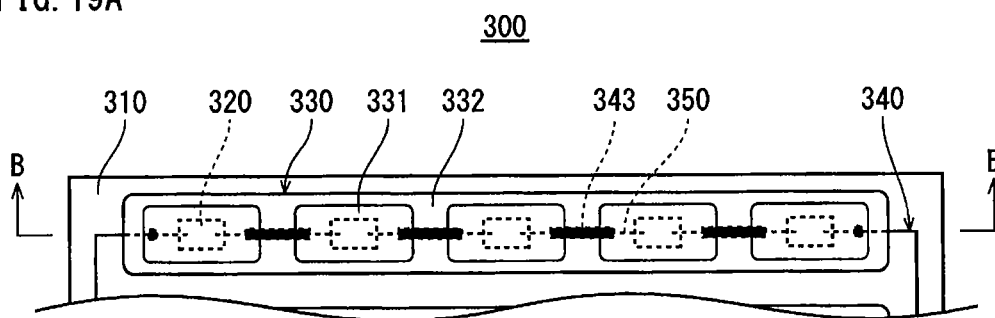


FIG. 19B

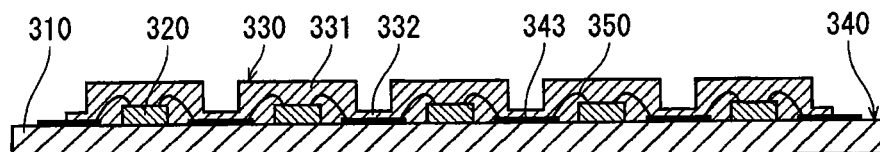


FIG. 20A

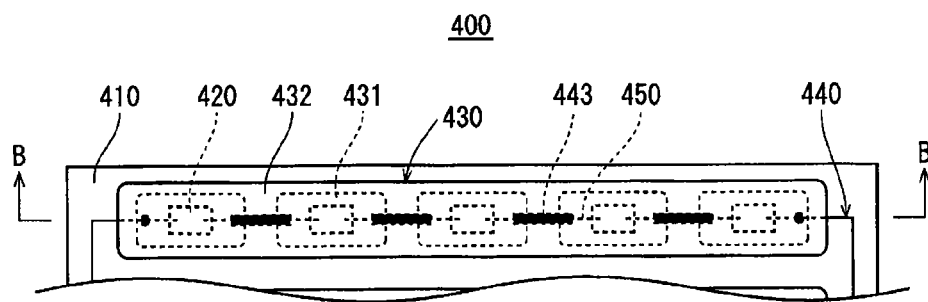


FIG. 20B

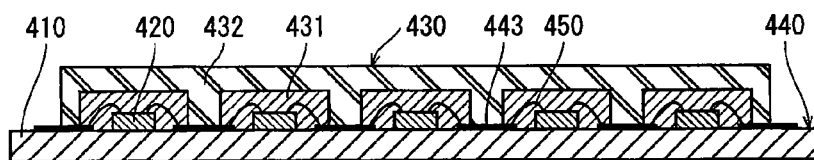


FIG. 21A

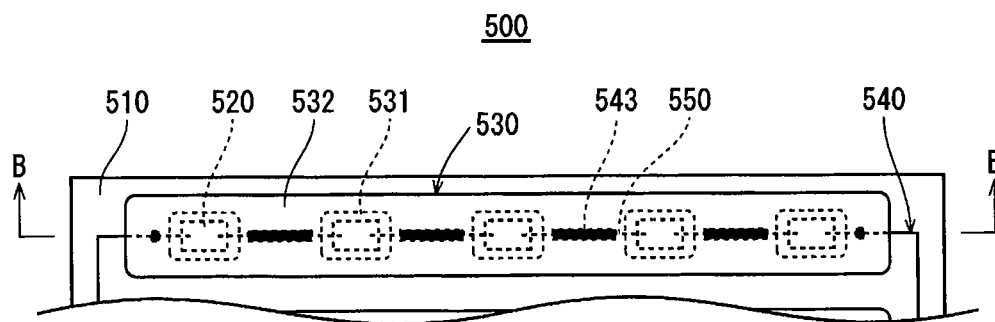


FIG. 21B

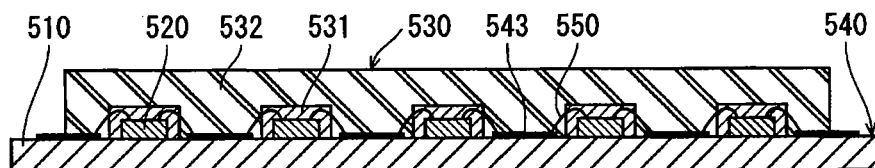


FIG. 22

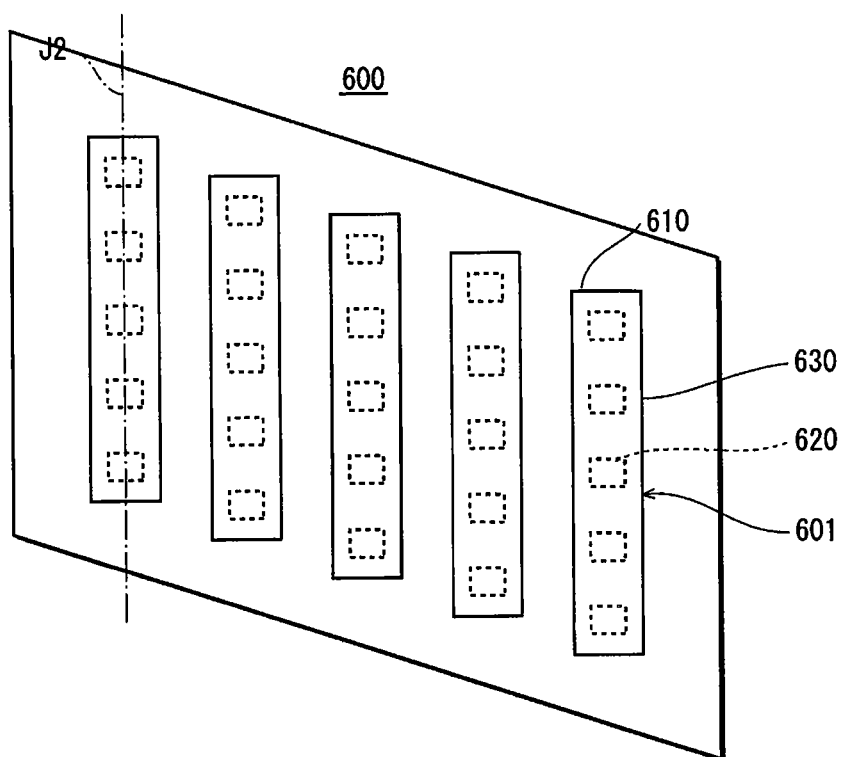


FIG. 23

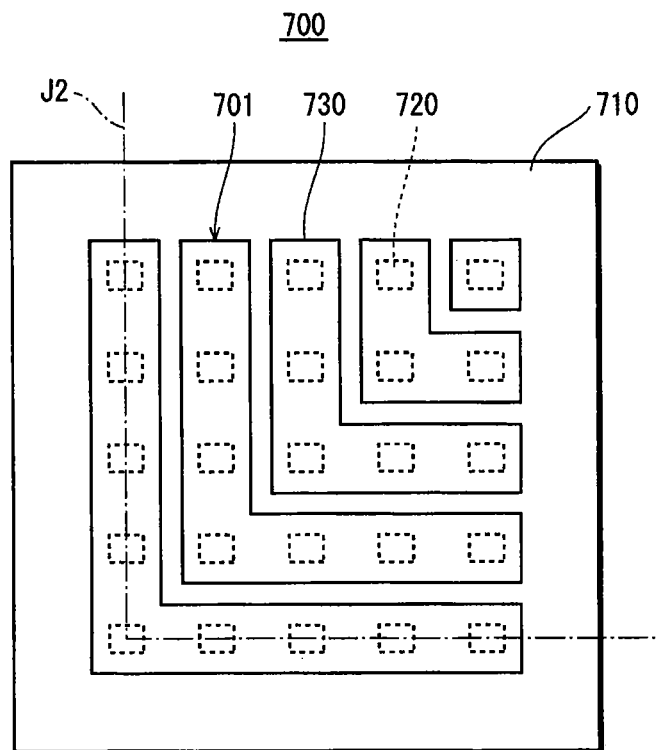


FIG. 24

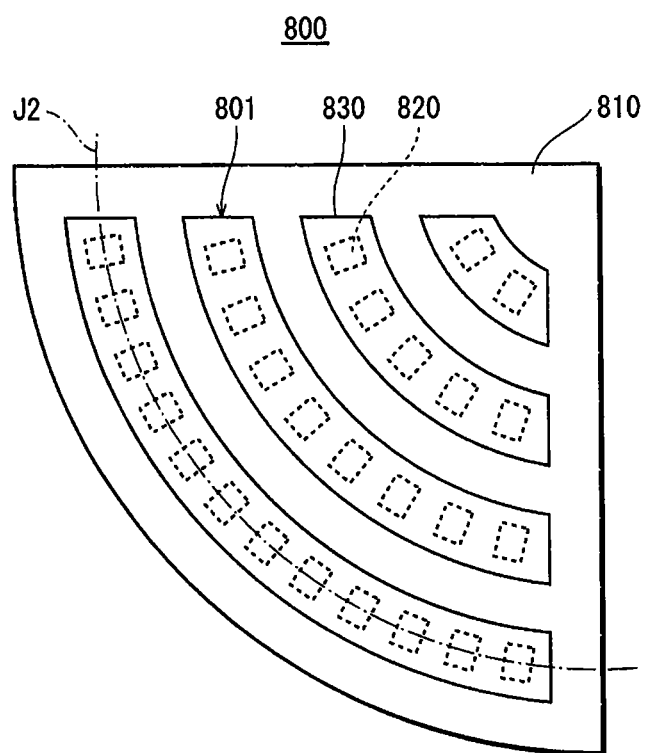


FIG. 25

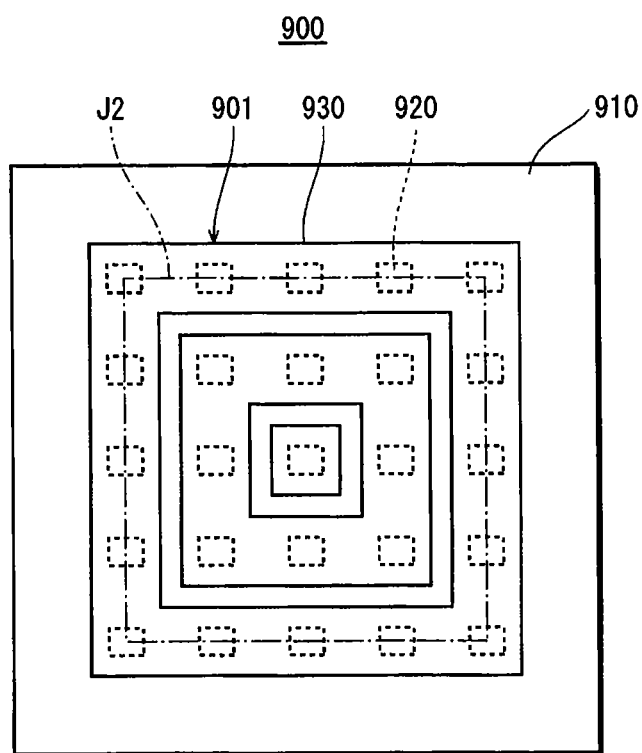
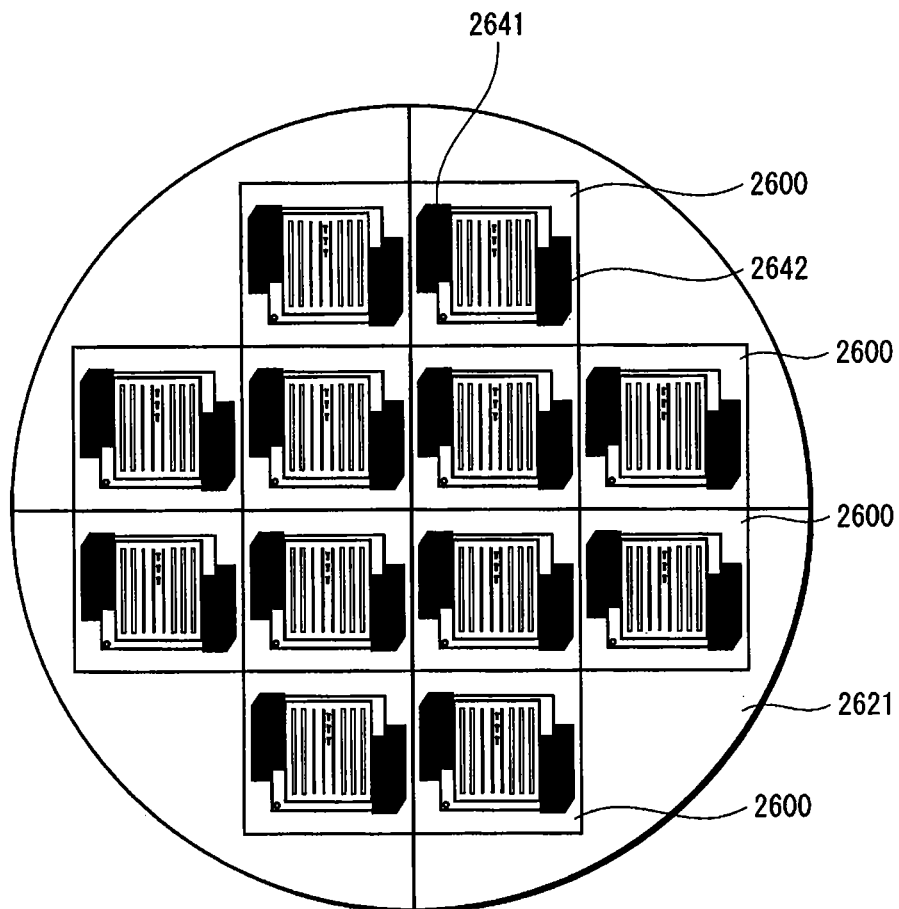


FIG. 26



1

LIGHT-EMITTING MODULE, LIGHT SOURCE DEVICE, LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY DEVICE, AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING LIGHT-EMITTING MODULE

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a light-emitting module having a plurality of light-emitting elements such as light-emitting diodes (LEDs), a light source device, a liquid crystal display device, and a method of manufacturing the light-emitting module.

BACKGROUND ART

In recent years, there is a growing demand for conservation of resources in the field of light source devices such as halogen light bulbs and fluorescent lamps, and many developments are carried out on light-emitting modules using LEDs with power-saving capabilities and long life. In such light-emitting modules, shortage of luminance caused by using the LEDs alone is supplemented by high integration of the LEDs. For example, Patent Literature 1 discloses a light-emitting module in which a plurality of LDS are arranged on a substrate in a matrix and sealed by a sealing member as a whole (see Patent Literature 1).

CITATION LIST

Patent Literature

[Patent Literature 1]

JP Patent Application Publication No. 2008-244165

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

Technical Problem

The above structure, however, makes the temperature of the central portion of the sealing member higher than the temperature of the outer edge portion of the sealing member when the LEDs generate heat. This is because the heat conducted to the central portion of the sealing member originates from a large number of LEDs, whereas the heat conducted to the outer edge portion of the sealing member originates from a fewer number of LEDs. One reasoning behind this is that no LEDs are arranged at the outer edge portion of the sealing member. Another reasoning is that although it is difficult for the central portion of the sealing member to lose heat since it is enclosed by the outer edge portion of the sealing member, it is easy for the outer edge portion of the sealing member to lose heat since its exterior is in contact with the outer air.

The properties of LEDs are such that the luminance of LEDs decreases at an excessively high temperature. Also, the properties of phosphors contained in the sealing member are such that the excitation efficiency of the phosphors decreases at an excessively high temperature. For the above reasons, the luminance of LEDs and the excitation efficiency of phosphors easily decrease in the high-temperature central portion of the sealing member. This is the cause of unevenness in the luminance and color of the light-emitting module.

In view of the above problem, the present invention aims to provide a light-emitting module, a light source device and a liquid crystal display device in which unevenness in the luminance and color hardly occurs compared to conventional technology. The present invention also aims to provide a

2

method of manufacturing a light-emitting module in which unevenness in the luminance and color hardly occurs.

Solution to Problem

To achieve the above aims, one aspect of the present invention is a light-emitting module comprising: a substrate; a plurality of element columns mounted on the substrate in rows, each element column including a plurality of light-emitting elements arranged in line; and a plurality of sealing members sealing the element columns in one-to-one correspondence therewith.

Another aspect of the present invention is a light source device comprising the above light-emitting module as a light source.

Another aspect of the present invention is a liquid crystal display device comprising a backlight unit including the above light-emitting module.

Another aspect of the present invention is a method of manufacturing a light-emitting module, the method comprising the steps of: preparing a substrate on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows, each element column including a plurality of light-emitting elements arranged in line; applying a plurality of lines of paste to the element columns in one-to-one correspondence such that each line of paste extends along the corresponding element column; and forming a plurality of sealing members by solidifying the applied lines of paste, each sealing member sealing the light-emitting elements included in the corresponding element column.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

In the light-emitting module, light source device and liquid crystal display device pertaining to aspects of the present invention, a plurality of element columns, each of which is constituted by light-emitting elements arranged in line, are mounted on a substrate in rows. Here, each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member. With this structure, the heat from light-emitting elements sealed by one sealing member is hardly conducted to other sealing members, and each sealing member easily loses the heat since its exterior is in contact with the outer air. As a result, the sealing members hardly have an excessively high temperature on a local basis, and the luminance of LEDs and the excitation efficiency of phosphors hardly decrease. Therefore, unevenness in the luminance and color hardly occurs.

One aspect of the present invention is a method of manufacturing a light-emitting module, the method comprising the steps of: preparing a substrate on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows, each element column including a plurality of light-emitting elements arranged in line; applying a plurality of lines of paste to the element columns in one-to-one correspondence such that each line of paste extends along the corresponding element column; and forming a plurality of sealing members by solidifying the applied lines of paste, each sealing member sealing the light-emitting elements included in the corresponding element column. This method allows manufacturing the above-described light-emitting module in which unevenness in the luminance and color hardly occurs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view showing a light source device pertaining to First Embodiment.

FIG. 2 shows a cross section taken along A-A in FIG. 1.

3

FIG. 3 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to First Embodiment.

FIGS. 4A and 4B are cross-sectional views showing a sealing member.

FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate a positional relationship between a sealing member and light-emitting elements.

FIG. 6 illustrates the effect of a positional relationship between a sealing member and light-emitting elements on the color of light.

FIGS. 7A and 7B are cross-sectional views illustrating thermal deformation of a sealing member.

FIG. 8 illustrates a method of forming a sealing member.

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view showing a liquid crystal display device pertaining to Second Embodiment.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to Second Embodiment.

FIG. 11 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to Third Embodiment.

FIG. 12 is a plan view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to Third Embodiment.

FIG. 13 is a plan view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to a modification example of Third Embodiment.

FIG. 14 is a plan view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to a modification example of Third Embodiment.

FIG. 15 is a plan view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to a modification example of Third Embodiment.

FIG. 16 is a plan view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to a modification example of Third Embodiment.

FIG. 17 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to a modification example.

FIGS. 18A and 18B illustrate a wire cutoff caused by expansion and contraction of a sealing member.

FIGS. 19A and 19B illustrate a sealing member pertaining to a modification example.

FIGS. 20A and 20B illustrate a sealing member pertaining to a modification example.

FIGS. 21A and 21B illustrate a sealing member pertaining to a modification example.

FIG. 22 illustrates element columns pertaining to a modification example.

FIG. 23 illustrates element columns pertaining to a modification example.

FIG. 24 illustrates element columns pertaining to a modification example.

FIG. 25 illustrates element columns pertaining to a modification example.

FIG. 26 illustrates an arrangement of LED modules.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

The following describes aspects of the present invention, namely a light-emitting module, a light source device, a liquid crystal display device, and a method of manufacturing a light-emitting module, with reference to the accompanying drawings.

First Embodiment

(Overall Structure)

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view showing a light source device pertaining to the present embodiment. FIG. 2 shows a cross section taken along A-A in FIG. 1. As shown in FIG. 1, an LED lamp 1, which is herein described as an example of a light source device pertaining to First Embodiment, includes the following main structural elements: a housing 10; a holder 20; a lighting circuit unit 30; a circuit case 40; a base 50; a

4

globe 60; and an LED module 100, which is herein described as an example of a light-emitting module pertaining to First Embodiment.

(Housing)

The housing 10 has a shape of, for example, a circular cylinder. The LED module 100 is disposed at one opening of the housing 10. The base 50 is disposed at the other opening of the housing 10. A highly heat-conductive material (e.g., aluminum) is used as a base material of the housing 10, so that the housing 10 functions as a heat dissipating member (heat sink) that dissipates heat from the LED module 100.

(Holder)

The holder 20 is made up of a module holding portion 21 and a circuit holding portion 22.

As shown in FIG. 2, the module holding portion 21, which has a shape of a substantially circular plate, is used to attach the LED module 100 to the housing 10. A substantially quadrilateral recess 23 that matches a substrate 110 in shape is formed in the substantial center of the main surface of the module holding portion 21, the main surface of the module holding portion 21 facing the LED module 100. As shown in FIG. 1, the LED module 100 is secured to the module holding portion 21 using an adhesive or a screw, with the substrate 110 fit in the recess 23 and the back surface of the substrate 110 adhered to the bottom surface of the recess 23.

A screw hole 24 and through holes 25 are also formed in the module holding portion 21. The screw hole 24 is for joining the module holding portion 21 and the circuit holding portion 22. Lead wires 35 of the lighting circuit unit 30 are inserted through the through holes 25. The module holding portion 21 is made of a highly heat-conductive material such as aluminum. Due to the properties of such a material, the module holding portion 21 also functions as a heat-conducting member that conducts heat from the LED module 100 to the housing 10.

The circuit holding portion 22 has a shape of a substantially circular dish. A boss hole 26 for joining the circuit holding portion 22 and the module holding portion 21 is formed in the center of the circuit holding portion 22. The module holding portion 21 and the circuit holding portion 22 are integrally secured to each other by screwing a screw 27 that has been inserted through the boss hole 26 into the screw hole 24 of the module holding portion 21.

A latching pawl 28 that latches with the circuit case 40 is provided along the outer circumference of the circuit holding portion 22. It is preferable that the circuit holding portion 22 be made of a material with a low relative density, such as synthetic resin, for the purpose of weight reduction. By way of example, the circuit holding portion 22 is made of polybutylene terephthalate (PBT) in the present example.

The lighting circuit unit 30 is made up of a circuit substrate 31 and a plurality of electronic components 32 mounted on the circuit substrate 31. The lighting circuit unit 30 is housed in the housing 10 with the circuit substrate 31 secured to the circuit holding portion 22.

(Case)

The circuit case 40 is made up of a cover portion 41 covering the lighting circuit unit 30 and a base attachment portion 42 that extends from the cover portion 41 and has a smaller diameter than the cover portion 41. The circuit case 40 is attached to the circuit holding portion 22 with the lighting circuit unit 30 housed therein. A latching hole 43 that latches with the latching pawl 28 of the circuit holding portion 22 is formed in the cover portion 41. The circuit case 40 is attached to the circuit holding portion 22 by the latching pawl 28 latching with the latching hole 43. It is preferable that the

5

circuit case **40** be made of the same material as the circuit holding portion **22** for the above-mentioned reason. By way of example, the circuit case **40** is also made of polybutylene terephthalate in the present example.

(Base)

The base **50** conforms to, for example, the standard for an Edison screw specified in Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS), and is used while being attached to a socket (not illustrated) designed for a general incandescent light bulb. More specifically, an E26 base is used as the base **50** when the LED lamp **1** corresponds to a 60-watt incandescent light bulb, and an E17 base is used as the base **50** when the LED lamp **1** corresponds to a 40-watt incandescent light bulb.

The base **50** is made up of a shell **51**, which is also called a tubular body portion, and an eyelet **52** having a shape of a circular dish. The shell **51** and the eyelet **52** are formed as a unitary component with an insulation member **53** therebetween, the insulation member **53** being made of a glass material. The base **50** is attached to the circuit case **40** with the shell **51** fit around the base attachment portion **42**. A through hole **44** is formed in the base attachment portion **42**. One power supply wire **33** of the lighting circuit unit **30** is inserted through the through hole **44** so as to extend to the outside. A part of the power supply wire **33** that is exposed to the outside is electrically connected to the shell **51** by soldering **54**. A through hole **55** is formed in the central portion of the eyelet **52**. Another power supply wire **34** of the lighting circuit unit **30** is inserted through the through hole **55** so as to extend to the outside. A part of the power supply wire **34** that is exposed to the outside is electrically connected to the eyelet **52** by soldering **56**.

(Globe)

The globe **60** has a shape of a substantial dome. An edge **61** of the globe **60** at the opening of the globe **60** is secured to the housing **10** and the module holding portion **21** by an adhesive **62** such that the globe **61** covers the LED module **100**.

(LED Module)

FIG. 3 is a perspective view showing the light-emitting module pertaining to the present embodiment. FIGS. 4A and 4B are cross-sectional views showing a sealing member. More specifically, FIG. 4A shows a cross section taken along the widthwise direction of the sealing member, and FIG. 4B shows a cross section taken along the lengthwise direction of the sealing member (i.e., along B-B in FIG. 3). As shown in FIG. 3, the LED module **100** is composed of the substrate **110**, a plurality of LEDs (light-emitting elements) **120**, and a plurality of sealing members **130**.

By way of example, the substrate **110** has a shape of a substantially quadrilateral plate and has a double-layer structure including (i) an insulation layer made of a ceramic substrate, heat-conductive resin, or the like, and (ii) a metallic layer made of an aluminum plate or the like. When viewed in a direction perpendicular to a mount surface **111** of the substrate **110** on which various components are mounted (hereinafter expressed as “in a plan view”), the substrate **110** has (i) a width **W1** of 12 mm to 30 mm along its widthwise direction (the X-axis direction) and (ii) a width **W2** of 12 mm to 30 mm along its lengthwise direction (the Y-axis direction).

As shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B, each LED **120** is, for example, a GaN LED that emits blue light. In a plan view, each LED **120** has a substantially quadrilateral shape and has (i) a width **W3** of 0.3 mm to 1.0 mm along its widthwise direction (the X-axis direction) and (ii) a width **W4** of 0.3 mm to 1.0 mm along its lengthwise direction (the Y-axis direction). Each LED **120** has a thickness (a width along the Z-axis direction) of 0.08 mm to 0.30 mm.

6

Each LED **120** is arranged so that in a plan view, the direction of its largest width (i.e., the lengthwise direction) is parallel to the direction along which the corresponding element column extends. According to this structure, each LED **120** has a small width along the row direction. This reduces the width **W5** of each sealing member **130** along the widthwise direction (the X-axis direction) in a plan view. As a result of reducing the width **W5** of each sealing member **130**, the distance between two neighboring sealing members **130** is increased, thus improving the heat dissipation properties of the sealing members **130**.

Each of the element columns is constituted by a plurality of LEDs **120** arranged in line. These element columns are mounted on the substrate **110** in parallel rows so as to extend along the row direction. To be more specific, by way of example, there is a total of twenty-five LEDs **120** mounted in a five-by-five matrix. That is to say, each element column consists of five LEDs **120**, and five element columns are mounted in rows. Note that the structure of the plurality of LEDs **120** is not limited to the above-described example (i.e., a total of twenty-five LEDs **120** mounted in a five-by-five matrix). It suffices if four or more LEDs **120** are mounted in at least a two-by-two matrix.

In each element column, LEDs **120** are linearly arranged along the column direction (the Y-axis direction). By thus linearly arranging the LEDs **120**, each of the sealing members **130** for sealing the LEDs **120** can also be formed in a linear shape. Since it is easy to form each sealing member **130** in a linear shape, the productivity of an LED module **100** is improved when each sealing member **130** is formed in a linear shape. Furthermore, when each sealing member **130** is formed in a linear shape, high integration of the LEDs **120** is easy, which can increase the luminance of the LED module **100**. To be more specific, by the term “linear shape”, it means that each LED **120** is mounted such that its center has a tolerance of 30- μ m shift or less from an arrangement axis **J2** of the corresponding element column (the arrangement axis **J2** passes through centers of all the light-emitting elements included in the corresponding element column in a plan view).

A distance **D1** between two neighboring LEDs **120** belonging to the same element column, as shown in FIG. 4B, is preferably in a range of 1.0 mm to 3.0 mm. If the distance **D1** is smaller than the above range, the heat from the LEDs **120** does not sufficiently dissipate. On the other hand, if the distance **D1** is greater than the above range, the aforementioned distance between two neighboring LEDs **120** becomes too large; this could cause unevenness in the luminance.

Each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **130** having an elongated shape. Each element column and the corresponding sealing member **130** sealing the same together form one light-emitting unit **101**. Put another way, the LED module **100** has five light-emitting units **101**.

Each sealing member **130** is made of a resin material having light transmitting properties and containing phosphors. Examples of such a resin material include silicone resin, fluororesin, silicone-epoxy hybrid resin, and urea resin. Powders of YAG phosphors ($(Y,Gd)_3Al_5O_{12}:Ce^{3+}$), silicate phosphors ($(Sr,Ba)_2SiO_4:Eu^{2+}$), nitride phosphors ($(Ca,Sr,Ba)AlSiN_3:Eu^{2+}$), oxynitride phosphors ($Ba_3Si_6O_{12}N_2:Eu^{2+}$), or the like may be used as the phosphors. As a result, part of the blue light emitted from the LEDs **120** is converted to yellow-green light, and the color mixture produces white light. Note that the sealing members **130** do not necessarily have to contain phosphors.

7

Returning to FIG. 3, in a case where phosphors are contained in the sealing members **130** (X_1 to X_5) each sealing the corresponding element column, the sealing members **130** (X_1 to X_5) need not contain identical phosphors. The sealing members **130** (X_1 to X_5) may contain phosphors that exhibit different colors among element columns. For example, the sealing members **130** (X_1), **130** (X_3) and **130** (X_5) may be made of a resin material having light transmitting properties and containing selected phosphors that exhibit a daylight color, and the sealing members **103** (X_2) and **130** (X_4) may be made of a resin material having light transmitting properties and containing selected phosphors that exhibit an incandescent light color. This structure enables the light-emitting units to produce a mixture of a daylight color and an incandescent light color. Furthermore, the light-emitting units can freely switch between different colors if lighting control is performed with respect to each of the element columns that have different color temperatures. Note that the daylight color denotes a color having a color temperature of approximately 5700 K to 7100 K, whereas the incandescent light color denotes a color having a color temperature of approximately 2600 K to 3150 K.

FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate a positional relationship between a sealing member and light-emitting elements. More specifically, FIG. 5A illustrates a state where a central axis **J1** is coaxially aligned with the arrangement axis **J2**, and FIG. 5B illustrates a state where the central axis **J1** is not coaxially aligned with the arrangement axis **J2**. FIG. 6 illustrates the effect of a positional relationship between a sealing member and light-emitting elements on the color of light.

In a light-emitting unit **101** shown in FIG. 5A, the central axis **J1** extending along the lengthwise direction of a sealing member **130** is coaxially aligned with the arrangement axis **J2** of an element column. As in this case, when the central axis **J1** and the arrangement axis **J2** are coaxially aligned, emitted light **L1** and emitted light **L2** are both white. On the other hand, when the central axis **J1** and the arrangement axis **J2** are not coaxially aligned as shown in FIG. 5B, emitted light **L1** is yellowish white, and emitted light **L2** is bluish white. That is to say, in the case of FIG. 5B, unevenness in the color of emitted light occurs among the light-emitting units **101**.

To be more specific, in a case where the central axis **J1** and the arrangement axis **J2** are coaxially aligned, light emitted from the light-emitting units **101** has the chromaticity distribution indicated by the reference sign "a" in FIG. 6. On the other hand, in a case where the arrangement axis **J2** is off the central axis **J1** by, for example, 150 μ m, light emitted from the light-emitting units **101** has the chromaticity distribution indicated by the reference sign "b" in FIG. 6. In view of the above, it is preferable that the central axis **J1** and the arrangement axis **J2** be coaxially aligned in order to prevent unevenness in the color of emitted light among the light-emitting units **101**.

Returning to FIG. 3, a distance **D2** between two neighboring sealing members **130** along the row direction (the X-axis direction) is, for example, 1.0 mm. It is preferable that the distance **D2** be in a range of 0.2 mm to 3.0 mm. If the distance **D2** is smaller than the above range, the effect of heat dissipation, which is obtained by providing a gap between two neighboring sealing members **130**, is not sufficient. On the other hand, if the distance **D2** is greater than the above range, a gap between two neighboring element columns becomes too large, and unevenness in the luminance easily occurs.

As shown in FIG. 4A or 4B, each sealing member **130** has (i) a width **W5** of 0.8 mm to 3.0 mm along its widthwise direction (the X-axis direction), (ii) a width **W6** of 3.0 mm to 40.0 mm along its lengthwise direction (the Y-axis direction),

8

(iii) a maximum thickness **T1**, including the LEDs **120**, of 0.4 mm to 1.5 mm (the width along the Z-axis direction), and (iv) a maximum thickness **T2**, excluding the LEDs **120**, of 0.2 mm to 1.3 mm. In order to secure reliability of sealing, the width **W5** of each sealing member **130** is preferably two to seven times the width **W3** of each LED **120**.

Each sealing member **130** has a substantially semielliptic cross section along its widthwise direction. End portions **131** and **132** of each sealing member **130** in the lengthwise direction have a round shape. More specifically, the end portions **131** and **132** of each sealing member **130** in the lengthwise direction have a shape of a substantial quarter of a sphere. Put another way, in a plan view, the end portions **131** and **132** have a substantially semicircular shape (see FIG. 2). The cross sections of the end portions **131** and **132** along the lengthwise direction have a shape of a substantially circular sector with a central angle of approximately 90° (see FIG. 4B). When the end portions **131** and **132** of each sealing member **130** in the lengthwise direction have a round shape as described above, stress concentration hardly occurs at the end portions **131** and **132**, and the light emitted from the LEDs **120** easily illuminates the outside of each sealing member **130**.

FIGS. 7A and 7B are cross-sectional views illustrating thermal deformation of a sealing member. More specifically, FIG. 7A shows a sealing member pertaining to the present embodiment, and FIG. 7B shows a general sealing member. Typically, the temperature of a portion of a sealing member **130** in the vicinity of an LED **120** easily becomes high; such a portion with a high temperature is susceptible to thermal deformation and contraction. In view of the above, as shown in FIG. 7A, a central portion **133** of a sealing member **130** in the widthwise direction is close to an LED **120** and therefore easily contracts. On the other hand, end portions **134** of the sealing member **130** in the widthwise direction are distanced from the LED **120** and therefore do not easily contract.

Since the sealing member **130** pertaining to the present embodiment has a substantially semielliptic cross section along the widthwise direction, the central portion **133** has a relatively large thickness. Hence, even if the central portion **133** contracts to a certain extent and consequently becomes thinner, there is hardly any difference between the thickness of the central portion **133** and the thickness of the end portions **134**.

On the other hand, as shown in FIG. 7B, in the case of a general sealing member **3001** that has a substantially rectangular cross section along the widthwise direction, a central portion **3002** has a smaller thickness than end portions **3003** due to the existence of an LED **3004**. In this case, if the central portion **3002** contracts and consequently becomes thinner, the difference between the thickness of the central portion **3002** and the thickness of the end portions **3003** becomes large. This may, for example, cause a crack to form in a portion **3005** between the central portion **3002** and the end portions **3003**. Accordingly, it is preferable for each sealing member **130** to have a substantially semielliptic or semicircular cross section along the widthwise direction. It is also preferable that the thickness **T1** be $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{5}$ of the width **W5**.

Each LED **120** is mounted face-up on the substrate **110**, and is electrically connected to the lead wires **35** of the lighting circuit unit **30** via a wiring pattern **140** formed on the substrate **110**. The wiring pattern **140** has a pair of lands **141** and **142** for power supply, and a plurality of lands **143** for bonding. The lands **143** are disposed so as to have a certain positional relationship with the LEDs **120**.

As shown in FIG. 3, each LED **120** is electrically connected to corresponding lands **143** by, for example, wires (e.g., metallic wires) **150** in the form of wire bonding. Here,

each wire **150** has one end **151** joined to the corresponding LED **120** and the other end **152** joined to the corresponding land **143**. Each wire **150** is arranged to extend along the element column to which the light-emitting element that is to be connected to the wire **150** belongs (i.e., along the arrangement axis **J2**). Both ends **151** and **152** of each wire **150** are also arranged to extend along that element column. The wires **150** hardly deteriorate because they are sealed by the sealing members **130** together with the LEDs **120** and the lands **143**. The wires **150** are also highly safe since they are insulated. The LEDs **120** is not limited to being mounted face-up on the substrate **110**, but may be flip chip mounted on the substrate **110**.

The LEDs **120** are connected to one another by a so-called series-parallel connection. More specifically, five LEDs **120** belonging to the same element column are connected in series to one another, and five element columns are connected in parallel to one another. The form of connection between the LEDs **120** is not limited to the above example. The LEDs **120** may be connected to one another in any manner, irrespective of the element columns.

The pair of lead wires **35** of the lighting circuit unit **30** are connected to the lands **141** and **142**. The LEDs **120** emit light by the lighting circuit unit **30** supplying power to the LEDs **120** via the pair of lead wires **35**.

According to the above-described LED module **100**, each element column constituted by a group of LEDs **120** is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **130** having an elongated shape. Therefore, the above-described LED module **100** is less likely to have an excessively high temperature on a local basis than an LED module in which all LEDs **120** are collectively sealed by one sealing member. Hence, the above-described LED module **100** hardly brings about (i) a reduction in the luminance of LEDs **120** and a reduction in the excitation efficiency of phosphors, which are attributed to an excessively high temperature in local areas, and (ii) unevenness in the luminance and color of the LED module **100**.

When the sealing members **130** have a high temperature in local areas, there will be a difference in the degree of expansion among different areas of the sealing members **130**, thus increasing the internal stress of the sealing members **130**. This causes formation of cracks and the like, which lowers reliability of sealing. However, in the case of the LED module **100** pertaining to the present embodiment, each sealing member **130** is formed to extend along the corresponding element column, and expands and contracts mainly in the direction along which the corresponding element column extends. Thus, the internal stress of the LED module **100** pertaining to the present embodiment hardly increases, and reliability of sealing hardly lowers.

Furthermore, since there is a gap between two neighboring sealing members **130**, the material used to form the sealing members **130** can be saved for such a gap, and therefore the cost of the LED module **100** can be reduced.

The above-described structure (each element column constituted by a group of LEDs **120** is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **130** having an elongated shape) is especially effective for an LED module with highly-integrated LEDs **120**. High integration can be defined by a pitch between two neighboring element columns (i.e., a distance **D3** between arrangement axes **J2** of two neighboring element columns, see FIG. 3). It can be said that the LEDs **120** are highly integrated when the pitch between two neighboring element columns is smaller than or equal to 5.0 mm. The pitch between two neighboring element columns is preferably smaller than or equal to four times the width **W5** of each

sealing member **130**, or more preferably smaller than or equal to three times the width **W5** of each sealing member **130**.

Alternatively, high integration may be defined by, for example, the ratio of an area actually occupied by the LEDs **120** to an element mounting area (i.e., an area defined by a width **W7**×a width **W8** shown in FIG. 2). Hereinafter, this ratio is referred to as an “area occupation ratio”. In this case, it can be said that the LEDs **120** are highly integrated when the area occupation ratio is larger than or equal to 0.7%. In the case of the LED module **100** pertaining to the present embodiment, as the width **W7** is 15 mm and the width **W8** is 15 mm, the element mounting area is 225 mm². Since twenty-five LEDs **120** are mounted and each LED **120** occupies an area of 0.16 mm², the total area occupied by all the LEDs **120** is 4.0 mm². Hence, the area occupation ratio of the LEDs **120** on the element mounting area is 1.8%.

Alternatively, high integration may be defined by the size of each LED **120** and the distance between two neighboring LEDs **120**. In this case, it can be said that the LEDs **120** are highly integrated when all of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) the width **W3** of each LED **120** is smaller than or equal to 1.0 mm; (ii) the width **w4** of each LED **120** is smaller than or equal to 1.0 mm; and (iii) the distance between two neighboring LEDs **120** in the column and row directions is smaller than or equal to 5.0 mm.

Alternatively, high integration may be defined by the size of each LED **120** and the number of LEDs **120** per unit area on the element mounting area. In this case, it can be said that the LEDs **120** are highly integrated when all of the following conditions are satisfied: (i) the width **W3** of each LED **120** is smaller than or equal to 1.0 mm; (ii) the width **W4** of each LED **120** is smaller than or equal to 1.0 mm; and (iii) provided the unit area is 1 mm², the number of LEDs **120** on the element mounting area is 0.04/mm². (Method of Manufacturing Light-Emitting Module)

Each sealing member **130** pertaining to the present embodiment can be formed according to the following procedure. FIG. 8 illustrates a method of forming a sealing member.

As shown in FIG. 8, a substrate **110** on which a plurality of element columns are arranged in rows is prepared, each element column extending along the row direction and including a plurality of LEDs **120** arranged in line. Then, a resin paste **135** is applied to the substrate **110** by using a dispenser or the like, so as to form lines of resin paste **135** along the element columns. After solidifying the applied lines of resin paste **135**, the sealing members **130** are formed in one-to-one correspondence with the element columns.

With the above structure in which the sealing members **130** are formed in one-to-one correspondence with the element columns, the sealing members **130** (**X₁**) to **130** (**X₅**) can easily be formed in a case where the sealing members **130** (**X₁**), **130** (**X₃**) and **130** (**X₅**) are made of a resin material having light transmitting properties and containing selected phosphors that exhibit a daylight color, and the sealing members **130** (**X₂**) and **130** (**X₄**) are made of a resin material having light transmitting properties and containing selected phosphors that exhibit an incandescent light color, as explained above with reference to FIG. 3.

For example, with reference to FIG. 5A, the following steps are performed in a process for applying a resin paste: (i) among LEDs **120** (**Y₁**) to **120** (**Y₅**) that constitute an element column, find the positions of LEDs **120** (**Y₁**) and **120** (**Y₅**) which are at respective ends of the element column in the direction along which the element column extends; (ii) calculate the centers **P1** and **P2** of side surfaces **121** (**Y₁**) and **121** (**Y₅**) of the LEDs **120** (**Y₁**) and **120** (**Y₅**) along the widthwise

11

direction of the side surfaces **121** (Y_1) and **121** (Y_5), the side surfaces **121** (Y_1) and **121** (Y_5) facing outside the element column and being perpendicular to the direction along which the element column extends; (iii) after calculating a straight line passing through the centers **P1** and **P2**, consider this straight line as an arrangement axis **J2**; and (iv) apply the resin paste on the arrangement axis **J2**.

Alternatively, for example, the following steps may be performed in a process for applying a resin paste: (i) find the positions of LEDs **120** (Y_1) and **120** (Y_5) which are at respective ends of the element column in the direction along which the element column extends; (ii) calculate a midpoint **P3** between the center of the LED **120** (Y_1) and the center of the LED **120** (Y_5); (iii) after calculating a straight line passing through the midpoint **P3** and the center **P1** of the side surface **121** (Y_1) of the LED **120** (Y_1) along the widthwise direction of the side surface **121** (Y_1), consider this straight line as an arrangement axis **J2**; and (iv) apply the resin paste on the arrangement axis **J2**.

The above methods allow forming a sealing member **130** such that the central axis **J1** of the sealing member **130** and the arrangement axis **J2** of the element column are coaxially aligned.

Unevenness in the amount of the applied resin paste **135** leads to unevenness in the shapes of sealing members **130**, thus lowering reliability of sealing. Furthermore, in a case where the resin paste **135** contains phosphors, unevenness in the amount of the applied resin paste **135** leads to unevenness in the amount of phosphors in the applied resin paste **135**, which could cause unevenness in the color. It is therefore preferable that the amount of the dispensed resin paste **135** be constant with high accuracy. More specifically, it is preferable that the amount of the applied resin paste **135** has a tolerance of 0.5 mg or smaller per sealing member **130**. In a case where the sealing members **130** are formed by providing lines of resin paste **135** with use of a die, it is important to accurately position the die in relation to the substrate **110**, in addition to dispense a constant amount of resin paste **135** with high accuracy. The position of the die in relation to the substrate **110** preferably has a tolerance of 80 μm or smaller.

It is preferable that the viscosity of the resin paste **135** be in a range of 20 Pa·s to 60 Pa·s. If the viscosity of the resin paste **135** is smaller than the above range, the resin paste **135** deforms immediately after the application. This makes it difficult to form the sealing members **130** in the intended shape. If the sealing members are not formed in the intended shape, problems arise in terms of performances (e.g., occurrence of unevenness in the color of light emitted from the light-emitting units **101**) and in terms of reliability of sealing (e.g., the wires **150** are exposed to the outside of the sealing members **130**). On the other hand, if the viscosity of the resin paste **135** is larger than the above range, then the resistance of the resin paste **135** becomes too high inside the nozzle of the dispenser, which makes application of the resin paste **135** difficult.

By making the viscosity of the resin paste **135** relatively high, i.e., 20 Pa·s to 60 Pa·s, the end portions **131** and **132** of each sealing member **130** in the lengthwise direction can be formed to have a round shape, or can be formed to have a substantially semielliptic cross-section along the widthwise direction. Moreover, by making the viscosity of the resin paste **135** high, the phosphors contained in the resin paste **135** do not easily sink down. As a result, unevenness in the color of light emitted from the light-emitting units **101** hardly occurs.

It should be noted that in order to make the viscosity of the resin paste **135** appropriate, the resin paste **135** preferably

12

contains at least 5 wt % of filler or phosphors. The filler may be, for example, white. Furthermore, in order to suitably maintain the shape of each sealing member **130**, it is preferable for each sealing member **130** to have a type-A Shore hardness of 20 or more.

Second Embodiment

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view showing a liquid crystal display device pertaining to Second Embodiment. As shown in FIG. 9, a liquid crystal display device **1001** pertaining to Second Embodiment is composed of an edge-lit backlight unit (light source device) **1010**, an active-matrix liquid crystal panel **1020**, a housing **1030**, and the like. The housing **1030** houses the backlight unit **1010**, the liquid crystal panel **1020**, and other components.

The backlight unit **1010** is composed of a housing **1011**, a reflecting sheet **1012**, a light guide plate **1013**, a diffusion sheet **1014**, a prism sheet **1015**, a polarization sheet **1016**, a heat sink **1017**, a lighting circuit **1018**, a plurality of LED modules **1100** as light-emitting modules pertaining to Second Embodiment, and the like. The housing **1011** is made up of a main body **1011a** and a front frame **1011b**.

Each LED module **1100** is composed of a substrate **1110**, a plurality of LEDs (light-emitting elements) **1120**, and a plurality of sealing members **1130**. The substrate **1110** has a mount surface **1111** facing a light incidence surface **1013a** of the light guide plate **1013**. Each LED module **1100** is mounted on a module mount surface **1017a** of the heat sink **1017**.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to Second Embodiment. As shown in FIG. 10, an LED module **1100** includes two element columns mounted on the substrate **1110** in two rows, each element column including twelve LEDs **1120** arranged in line. Here, each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **1130**. A pair of lands **1141** and **1142** for power supply, as well as wiring units **1134** for connecting the LEDs **1120** to one another by series-parallel connection, are provided on the mount surface **1111** of the substrate **1110**.

Third Embodiment

FIG. 11 is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to Third Embodiment. FIG. 12 is a plan view showing the light-emitting module pertaining to Third Embodiment.

An LED module used as the light-emitting module pertaining to the present invention may be structured such that all sealing members are joined to a joining member formed on a substrate. For example, as shown in FIG. 11, the LED module **2100** is structured such that each of the sealing members **2130** (of the light-emitting units **2101**), which are located in the vicinity of the center of the substrate **2110**, has its end portions joined to a joining member **2160**. Here, all the sealing members **2130** and the joining member **2160** constitute a framework **2102** having a ladder-like structure. More specifically, as shown in FIG. 12, a plurality of element columns are mounted on the substrate **2110** in parallel rows, each element column including LEDs **2120** arranged in line. Each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **2130** having an elongated shape and extending along the element column. One end portion **2131** and the other end portion **2132** of each sealing member **2130** along the lengthwise direction are both joined to the frame-shaped joining member **2160**. In a plan view, the framework **2102** constituted by the sealing members **2130** and the joining member **2160**

13

has a shape of a ladder. Note that in FIG. 12, two-dot chain lines indicate borders between the sealing members 2130 and the joining member 2160 (the same goes for FIGS. 13, 15 and 16).

In the present invention, the ladder-like structure denotes a structure in which a plurality of lineal members are joined to one another at end portions thereof. By using the above-described sealing members having a ladder-like structure, a grid-like optical path is formed. This reduces unevenness in the luminance. When the ladder-like structure is employed, it is preferable that the height of the joining member 2160 be similar to or smaller than that of each sealing member 2130 sealing the corresponding element column, so as to suppress blocking of the light emitted from the light-emitting units 2001.

The joining member 2160 is joined to all of the sealing members 2130 that constitute the light-emitting units 2101, and has a shape of a loop enclosing all of the sealing members 2130. The joining member 2160 is made of, for example, the same material as the sealing members 2130. The material of the sealing members 2130 that seal the LEDs 2120 is preferably the same as the material of the joining member 2160 that is joined to one end portion 2131 and the other end portion 2132 of every sealing member 2130, so as to join the sealing members 2130 to the joining member 2160 without forming an interface at the joints. Here, by the term "the same", it means that it suffices if the base of the sealing members 2130, representative examples of which include resin or glass, is made of the same material as the base of the joining member 2160. It is permissible that additives (e.g., phosphors) contained in the base may differ between the sealing members 2130 and the joining member 2160. The material of the joining member 2160 that forms the outer frame of the ladder-like structure need not contain phosphors, or may be a transparent or white material that does not contain any phosphors.

Each LED 2120 is mounted face-up on the substrate 2110, and is electrically connected to lead wires (not illustrated) of a lighting circuit unit via a wiring pattern 2140 formed on the substrate 2110. The wiring pattern 2140 has a pair of lands for power supply (not illustrated), which are electrically connected to connector terminals 2141 and 2142, and a plurality of lands for bonding (not illustrated), which are disposed so as to have a certain positional relationship with the LEDs 2120.

An element other than the LEDs 2120 and a part of the wiring pattern 2140 are sealed in the joining member 2160. The joining member 2160 need not seal the LEDs constituting the element columns. However, in order to preserve the properties of the LED module 1000, the joining member 2160 preferably seals the element other than the LEDs 2120 and the wiring pattern 2140 for the following reason.

When the wiring pattern 2140 is made of metallic members such as Ag wires, there is a concern about deterioration of the wiring pattern 2140 (e.g., oxidization of the surface of the wiring pattern 2140) over time. However, by covering the wiring pattern 2140 with the joining member 2160 as described above, such deterioration can be suppressed.

In the present embodiment, a Zener diode 2170 is sealed as the aforementioned element other than the LEDs 2120. In the Zener diode 2170, electrodes having an opposite polarity from the LEDs 2120 are connected in parallel to one another. As the Zener diode 2170 protects the LEDs 2120 from electrostatic breakdown, the LED module 2100 is highly resistant to noise. It should be noted that many of general-purpose Zener diodes are black. Therefore, positioning the Zener diode 2170 in the vicinity of the LEDs 2120 effectively prevents static electricity, but also causes the Zener diode 2170 to absorb light. In view of this, by covering the Zener diode 2170

14

with the joining member 2160, absorption of light is effectively suppressed. Also, disposing the Zener diode 2170 at a position distant from the LEDs 2120 effectively suppresses further absorption of light.

It should be noted that the aforementioned element other than the LEDs 2120 is not limited to the Zener diode 2170. Furthermore, the joining member 2160 may seal one or more LEDs 2120.

By way of example, the framework 2102 is formed in the following manner. The substrate 2110 is prepared on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in parallel rows, each element column being composed of LEDs 2120 arranged in line. On the substrate 2110, a line of paste is applied to each element column so as to extend along the element column. By solidifying the applied lines of paste, the sealing members 2130 are formed that each seal a group of LEDs 2120 constituting the corresponding element column. Thereafter, a line of paste is applied so as to be joined to one end portion 2131 and the other end portion 2132 of every sealing member 2130 in the lengthwise direction. By solidifying the applied line of paste, the joining member 2160 that is joined to all of the sealing members 2130 is formed. As a result, in a plan view, the sealing members 2130 and joining member 2160 together form a shape of a ladder.

It should be noted that a method of forming the framework 2102 having a ladder-like structure is not limited to a particular method, as long as it can join the sealing members 2130 each sealing the corresponding element column to one another. Examples of a method of forming the framework 2102 having a ladder-like structure are as follows: (a) after the sealing members 2130 are formed so as to cover the LEDs 2120 mounted on the substrate 2110, form the frame-shaped joining member 2160 that surrounds the sealing members 2130 so as to join one end portion 2131 and the other end portion 2132 of every sealing member 2130 to the joining member 2160; and (b) after the joining member 2160 is formed, form the sealing members 2130 so as to cover the respective element columns.

However, in order to join all of the sealing members 2130 to the joining member 2160 without forming an interface at the joints, it is preferable to first form either the sealing members 2130 or the joining member 2160, and then form the other before the firstly-formed sealing members 2130 or joining member 2160 completely solidifies. Note that when the above-described ladder-like structure is employed, it is preferable that the joining member 2160 be formed so as to extend along the same direction as wires (e.g., Au wires) connecting between the LEDs 2120. This is because if the joining member 2160 is formed so as to extend substantially perpendicular to the direction along which the mounted wires extend, the stress acts in the direction substantially perpendicular to the wires, which makes occurrence of wire cutoff and the like highly likely. For the above reason, it is preferable that the joining member 2160 be formed so as to extend in a direction along which none of the mounted wires extends, or in a direction along which the mounted wires extend.

The LED module 2100 uses the connector terminals 2141 and 2142 as terminals for supplying power to each element column. The connector terminals 2141 and 2142 are not limited to being disposed at particular positions. The connector terminals 2141 and 2142 may be disposed at any positions on the substrate 2110 as long as they can supply power to each element column. Using the connector terminals 2141 and 2142 in the above manner makes electrical connection to the LED module 2100 easy, and also improves the workability of the LED module 2100 (e.g., makes it easy to assemble the LED module 2100). Meanwhile, if the distance between the

15

element columns and the connector terminals **2141** and **2142** is large, then the size of the substrate **2110** may become large as compared to a case where the lead wires are directly soldered to the wiring pattern, and the connector terminals **2141** and **2142** may absorb more light than in the case where the lead wires are directly soldered to the wiring pattern. Accordingly, in a case where the connector terminals **2141** and **2142** are used, it is preferable to adjust the height of each element column, the distance between the connector terminals **2141** and **2142** and the element columns, and the like, so that the connector terminals **2141** and **2142** are not on any of the optical paths of the light emitted from the element columns.

The shape of the joining member **2160**, which constitutes the framework having a ladder-shaped structure, is not limited to a certain shape in particular, as long as the joining member **2160** is joined to all of the sealing members **2130** constituting the light-emitting units.

For example, an LED module **2200** shown in FIG. **13** has a substrate **2210** on which a wiring pattern **2240** is formed. A plurality of element columns, each including a plurality of LEDs **2220**, are mounted on the substrate **2210** and connected in parallel to one another. Each element column is sealed by a sealing member **2230**. A pair of linear joining members **2260** are formed such that one of the joining members **2260** is at one end portion **2231** of each sealing member **2230** and the other joining member **2260** is at the other end portion **2232** of each sealing member **2230**. The joining members **2260** are parallel to each other and sandwich the sealing members **2230** therebetween. The pair of joining members **2260** each have an elongated shape and extend along a direction perpendicular to a direction along which each element column extends. One of the joining members **2260** is joined to one end portion **2231** of each sealing member **2230**, and the other joining member **2260** is joined to the other end portion **2232** of each sealing member **2230**. The framework **2202** can be formed to have a ladder-like structure also when the above-described joining members **2260** are used.

As another example, an LED module **2300** shown in FIG. **14** has a substrate **2310** on which a wiring pattern **2340** is formed. A plurality of element columns, each including a plurality of LEDs **2320**, are mounted on the substrate **2310** and connected in parallel to one another. Each element column is sealed by a sealing member **2330**. A pair of parallel linear joining members **2360** are joined to parts of the sealing members **2330**. Each sealing member **2330** intersects with the joining members **2360** at a right angle. At the intersections between the sealing members **2330** and the joining members **2360**, the joining members **2360** sit on the sealing members **2330**. As in the above manner, the joining members **2360** need not necessarily be joined to one end portion **2331** and/or the other end portion **2332** of each sealing member **2330**. The framework **2302** can be formed to have a ladder-like structure also when the joining members **2360** are joined to other parts of each sealing member **2330**.

Furthermore, the framework constituted from the sealing members and the joining member is not limited to having a ladder-like structure.

For example, an LED module **2400** shown in FIG. **15** has a substrate **2410** on which a wiring pattern **2440** is formed. A plurality of element columns, each including a plurality of LEDs **2420**, are mounted on the substrate **2410** and connected in series to one another. Each element column is sealed by a sealing member **2430**. An L-shaped joining member **2460** is joined only to one end portion **2432** of each sealing member **2430**, and is not joined to the other end portion **2431** of each

16

sealing member **2430**. When the joining member **2460** has such an L shape, the framework **2402** has a comb-shaped structure.

As another example, an LED module **2500** shown in FIG. **16** has a substrate **2510** on which a wiring pattern **2540** is formed. A plurality of element columns, each including a plurality of LEDs **2520**, are mounted on the substrate **2510** and connected in series to one another. Each element column is sealed by a sealing member **2530**. Here, one end portion **2531** of the first sealing member **2530** from the right is joined to one end portion **2531** of the second sealing member **2530** from the right, the other end portion **2532** of the second sealing member **2530** from the right is joined to the other end portion **2532** of the third sealing member **2530** from the right, and so on. In this case, the framework **2502** constituted by the sealing members **2530** and joining members **2560** has a linear serpentine shape. As in the above manner, the sealing members **2530** need not be connected to one another at all of one end portions **2531** or all of the other end portions **2532** thereof. It suffices if each sealing member **2530** is at least partially joined to any of the joining members **2560**.

Modification Examples

The above has specifically explained the light-emitting module, the light source device and the liquid crystal display device pertaining to the present invention based on the embodiments. However, the light source device pertaining to the present invention is not limited to the above embodiments. (Form of Wire Bonding)

FIG. **17** is a perspective view showing a light-emitting module pertaining to one modification example. FIGS. **18A** and **18B** illustrate wire cutoff caused by expansion and contraction of a sealing member. The form of wire bonding is not limited to the structure pertaining to First Embodiment, i.e., the structure in which each wire **150** is arranged to extend along an element column to which the light-emitting element that is to be connected to the wire **150** belongs (see FIG. **4B**). As shown in FIG. **17**, each wire **250** may be arranged to extend along a direction perpendicular to a direction along which the corresponding element column extends.

A light-emitting module **200** has a plurality of element columns that are mounted on a substrate **210** in rows to extend along the row direction. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **220** arranged in line, and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **230**. A wiring pattern **240** is formed on the substrate **210**. The wiring pattern **240** includes a pair of lands **241** and **242** for power supply, and a plurality of lands **243** for bonding. The LEDs **220** are electrically connected to the wiring pattern **240** via the wires **250**. End portions **251** and **252** of each wire **250** are arranged so as to extend along a direction perpendicular to the arrangement axis **J2** of the corresponding element column.

With the above structure, the wires **250** could easily be cut off because the direction of expansion and contraction of the sealing members **230** differs from the direction along which the end portions **251** and **252** extend. To be more specific, assume a case where a sealing member **230**, which is originally in the shape illustrated in FIG. **18A**, expands in a direction along which an element column extends as shown in FIG. **18B** (i.e., a direction along which the LEDs in the element column are arranged, as indicated by an open arrow in FIG. **18B**). In this case, wires **250** (Y_1) and **250** (Y_5), which are at respective ends of the element column in the direction along which the element column extends, significantly move in accordance with the movement of the sealing member **230**, because the amount of the movement of the sealing member

17

230 (i.e., the amount shown by filled arrows in FIG. **18B**) is large at respective ends of the element column in the direction along which the element column extends. Accordingly, stress concentrates on the end portions **251** and **252** that are connected to the LEDs **220** and the lands **243** and therefore cannot move. This may result in wire cutoff at connecting portions.

Hence, it is preferable that each wire **150** be arranged to extend along the element column to which the light-emitting element that is to be connected to the wire **150** belongs, as shown in FIG. **3**. With this structure, even if a sealing member **130** expands in the direction along which an element column extends (i.e., the direction indicated by the open arrow in FIG. **18B**), the wires **150** are not easily cut off because the direction of expansion matches the direction along which the wires **150** extend (i.e., the direction indicated by filled arrows in FIG. **18B**).

It should be noted that in a case where each wire **250** is arranged to extend along the direction perpendicular to the arrangement axis **J2** of the corresponding element column, the width of each sealing member **230** in the widthwise direction increases. This narrows the distance **D4** between two neighboring sealing members **230** along the row direction (the X-axis direction) (see FIG. **17**), thus reducing the effect of heat dissipation.

(Form of Sealing Member)

The sealing members may be formed in the following manner. FIGS. **19A** to **21B** illustrate sealing members pertaining to various modification examples. More specifically, FIGS. **19A**, **20A** and **21A** are plan views and FIGS. **19B**, **20B** and **21B** are cross-sectional views taken along B-B in FIGS. **19A**, **20A** and **21A**.

An LED module **300** shown in FIGS. **19A** and **19B** has a substrate **310** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows to extend along the row direction. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **320** arranged in line, and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **330**. The LEDs **320** are electrically connected to lands **343** for bonding, which are a part of a wiring pattern **340** formed on the substrate **310**, via wires **350**. Each sealing member **330** has (i) thick portions **331** in which the LEDs **320** and the wires **350** are sealed, and (ii) thin portions **332** in which mainly the lands **343** are sealed. As in this example, the thickness, the width, the shape, and the like of each sealing member **330** need not be constant along the corresponding element column. However, it is preferable that at least the LEDs **320** and the wires **350** be sealed in each sealing member **330**.

An LED module **400** shown in FIGS. **20A** and **20B** has a substrate **410** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows to extend along the row direction. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **420** arranged in line, and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **430**. The LEDs **420** are electrically connected to lands **443** for bonding, which are a part of a wiring pattern **440** formed on the substrate **410**, via wires **450**. Each sealing member **430** has first sealing portions **431** containing phosphors, and a second sealing portion **432** containing no phosphors. The first sealing portions **431** only seal the LEDs **420** and the wires **450**. The second sealing portion **432**, which is formed to extend along the element column, seals the first sealing portions **431** and the lands **443**. As in this example, phosphors need not necessarily be contained throughout each sealing member **430**, but may be contained only in part of each sealing member **430**. Alternatively, each sealing member **430** may not contain any phosphors at all.

An LED module **500** shown in FIGS. **21A** and **21B** has a substrate **510** on which a plurality of element columns are

18

mounted in rows to extend along the row direction. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **520** arranged in line, and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **530**. The LEDs **520** are electrically connected to lands **543** for bonding, which are a part of a wiring pattern **540** formed on the substrate **510**, via wires **550**. Each sealing member **530** has first sealing portions **531** containing phosphors, and a second sealing portion **532** containing no phosphors. The first sealing portions **531** only seal the LEDs **520** and parts of the wires **550**. The second sealing portion **532**, which is formed to extend along the element column, seals remaining parts of the wires **550** and the lands **543**. As in this case, it suffices if the phosphors are contained in each sealing member **530** at least in the vicinity of the LEDs **520**.

(Form of Element Columns)

The element columns may be formed in the following manner. FIGS. **22** to **25** illustrate element columns pertaining to various modification examples.

An LED module **600** shown in FIG. **22** has a substrate **610** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in parallel rows to extend in the row direction. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **620** arranged in line, and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **630**. The element columns are positionally shifted from one another in the column direction. Each of light-emitting units **601** has a linear shape. Positions of end portions of each light-emitting unit **601** are different from positions of end portions of any neighboring light-emitting units **601** along the column direction. As in this example, the element columns may be positionally shifted from one another in the column direction. Furthermore, the element columns may not be parallel to one another.

An LED module **700** shown in FIG. **23** has a substrate **710** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows. Specifically, one element column includes one LED **720** and is sealed by a sealing member **730**. Four element columns each include a plurality of LEDs **720** arranged in a substantial shape of the letter "L", and are each individually sealed by a separate sealing member **730** having a substantial shape of the letter "L". Accordingly, light-emitting units **701** corresponding to the aforementioned four element columns each have a substantial shape of the letter "L". As in this example, element columns mounted in rows may be bent to form a shape of the letter "L", "V", or the like.

An LED module **800** shown in FIG. **24** has a substrate **810** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows. Each element column includes a plurality of LEDs **820** arranged in a substantially circular arc and is individually sealed by a separate sealing member **830** having a shape of a substantially circular arc. Accordingly, light-emitting units **801** each have a shape of a substantially circular arc. As in this example, element columns are not limited to having a linear shape, but may be curved.

An LED module **900** shown in FIG. **25** includes a substrate **910** on which a plurality of element columns are mounted in rows. Specifically, one element column includes one LED **920** and is sealed by a sealing member **930**. Two element columns each include a plurality of LEDs **920** arranged in a single loop and are each individually sealed by a separate sealing member **930** having a shape of a loop. Accordingly, except for one light-emitting unit **901** located at the center, all light-emitting units **901** have a shape of a loop. As in this example, element columns may have a shape of a loop. It should be noted that a shape of a loop is not limited to the quadrilateral loop shown in FIG. **25**, but may be a polygonal loop, a circular loop, an elliptical loop, or the like.

(Other Notes)

In a light-emitting module pertaining to the present invention, a plurality of element columns, each composed of a plurality of LEDs arranged in line, are mounted on a substrate in rows, and each element column is individually sealed by a separate sealing member. Therefore, when the light-emitting module is cut on a per-line basis after the sealing process, a plurality of LED module strips can be obtained on each of which a plurality of LED elements are arranged in line. Furthermore, by properly selecting the positions at which the light-emitting module is cut, it is possible to obtain, at a time, a large number of LED module strips on each of which LED element columns having a desired shape are arranged. This improves high-volume production of module strips.

Light-emitting elements are not limited to LEDs, but may be semiconductor laser diodes, electroluminescence elements, or the like. Also, the color of the light emitted from the light-emitting units is not limited to white, but may be any color. Furthermore, the sealing members may contain different types of phosphors so that the color of emitted light differs among the light-emitting units. For example, it is permissible to alternately arrange light-emitting units that emit light having an incandescent light color and light-emitting units that emit light having a daylight color. This allows switching between an operation of lighting the light-emitting units that emit light having an incandescent light color and an operation of lighting the light-emitting units that emit light having a daylight color.

Furthermore, by combining a plurality of LED modules pertaining to the present invention, an LED module having a desired size can be obtained. To be more specific, such an LED module having a desired size can be obtained as follows: as shown in FIG. 26, after preparing a plurality of (in the present example, twelve) LED modules 2600 having the same shape, the LED modules 260 are electrically connected to one another in parallel. In this case, if the LED modules 2600 are arranged on a module holding portion 2621 in a concentric manner, then a large-scale LED module aggregate capable of producing highly uniform light can be obtained. Note that the LED modules 2600 may be connected to one another in parallel or in series with use of, for example, connector terminals 2641 and 2642. A method of connection of the LED modules 2600 is not limited to a particular method. However, in a case where a plurality of LED modules 2600 are combined, it is preferable to connect the LED modules 2600 to one another in parallel, in order to prevent failure in lighting caused by defective connection.

A light-emitting module, a light source device, and a liquid crystal display device pertaining to the present invention may be structured based on any partial combination of the embodiments and modification examples the embodiments.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

A light-emitting module pertaining to the present invention can be widely used for general lighting purposes.

REFERENCE SIGNS LIST

- 1 light source device
- 100 light-emitting module
- 110 substrate
- 120 light-emitting element
- 130 sealing member
- 140 wiring pattern
- 150 wire
- 151, 152 end portion
- 1001 liquid crystal display device
- 1010 backlight unit
- J1 central axis
- J2 arrangement axis
- The invention claimed is:
- 1. A light-emitting module comprising:
 - a substrate;
 - a plurality of element columns mounted on the substrate in rows, each element column including a plurality of light-emitting elements arranged in line;
 - a plurality of translucent sealing members sealing the element columns in one-to-one correspondence therewith;
 - a linear joining member that is provided on the substrate, and is joined to at least one end portion of each of two or more of the sealing members in a lengthwise direction of the sealing member;
 - a plurality of wires; and
 - a wiring pattern provided on the substrate, wherein the light-emitting elements are electrically connected to the wiring pattern via the plurality of wires that are not in contact with the substrate,
- each wire is arranged to extend along the element column, wherein
- each light-emitting element is arranged such that a direction of the longest dimension of the light-emitting elements extend along the element column with one of the plurality of translucent sealing members sealing each wire connecting the light-emitting elements.
- 2. The light-emitting module of claim 1, wherein the joining member has a shape of a frame surrounding the two or more of the sealing members.
- 3. The light-emitting module of claim 1, wherein a framework constituted by the two or more of the sealing members and the joining member has a shape of a ladder in a plan view.
- 4. The light-emitting module of claim 1, wherein a material of the sealing members is the same as a material of the joining member.
- 5. The light-emitting module of claim 1, wherein the joining member seals one of (i) at least one element other than the light-emitting elements and (ii) the wiring pattern provided on the substrate.
- 6. A light source device comprising the light-emitting module of claim 1.
- 7. A liquid crystal display device comprising the light-emitting module of claim 1.

* * * * *